LAZARUS

HENRI BERAUD

UNIV. OF ARIZONA
PQ2603.E585 L313
Beraud, Henri/Lazarus
mn
3 9001 03911 3959

LAZARUS

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

LAZARUS

BY

HENRI BÉRAUD

PQ
2603
E585
L313

Translated by
ERIC SUTTON

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1925

All rights reserved

COPYRIGHT, 1925,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped.
Published March, 1925.

Printed in the United States of America by
J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

PART I

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/lazardus0000henr

LAZARUS

I

On the 13th of December, 1922, as night was falling, Jean Mourin awoke. As he shook off his torpor he felt as though he were climbing up the steps of an interminable staircase towards the daylight. For a long time a monotonous tapping sound had been breaking into his sleep: at last he recognised the noise of the rain against the window panes. Then a pinkish light seemed to penetrate his eyes: he opened them: everything round him was white and bare. He sat up with an effort. He recognised the place perfectly well though he had never seen it: it was the hospital.

Jean Mourin was waking up in a room in a hospital. He felt his shoulders, his stomach, the top of his head. Hurriedly he stretched and bent his limbs, like a swimmer. Nothing. He felt no discomfort, no fever.

He began to think. To wake up without knowing how or why in a room in a hospital, was this all? A

feeling of rest, the softness of a sick bed, nothing more. He accepted his adventure calmly: what surprised and frightened him was rather, by a singular inversion, the fact that he was neither surprised nor frightened.

Jean was certain, absolutely certain, that he knew neither the brass and iron bedstead, the painted furniture, nor the high wall with its elongated crucifix, nor the number 67 pinned onto his linen curtains.

He could not remember ever having worn the coat and trousers of grey frieze thrown in disorder on to a chair, nor the heavy socks nor the slippers, nor carried that stick with its handle polished by use. And yet . . . All this seemed new and yet familiar. He passed his hand over his forehead, and tired of looking for an answer, lay down again.

He was alone, enveloped in a heavy silence save for the incessant and invisible patter of the rain against the windows as it fell from the dim sky. Darkness entered. On the table beside his bed Jean observed a reflector lamp which shed a crude light on to his pillow. There was no smell of drugs in the room, but there was an odour of tobacco. In a corner half hidden by the darkness was the shape of a door of which the upper part was of ground glass: doubtless it opened on to a badly lit passage, carpeted and rather narrow. Jean assumed this from the passing shadows which were outlined on the milky screen of the glass.

People came and went beside him; but he did not speak. He lay back motionless under the bed-clothes. The failing light affected his will. He felt swallowed up although he was strong, healthy, and rested. Then on his left, on the side opposite to the door, he heard something going on. People were talking behind the partition. The words were indistinct and the man in bed could not hear them; but he distinguished a woman's voice and several men's voices: probably the doctor on his rounds. Suddenly a short cry, some remonstrances, then orders in a tone of authority, a cough, footsteps, the sound of a latch, and silence once more.

Jean Mourin could bear it no longer. He called out with all his strength. As he did so the door opened and a Sister's cap appeared.

"Well! what is it?" she said. "You must keep quiet."

With one hand she tried to make the sick man lie down, and with the other she put the bed straight.

"Come, come now."

"Where am I?" said Jean Mourin. "What has happened?"

The Sister started, changed colour and dropped the bed-clothes.

"What!" she said: "you want to know . . . ? He's coming back! He's speaking! Doctor, doctor!"

She ran to the door and disappeared down the corridor.

The man trembled as he lay on the bed.

A group of people entered the room.

"I want to know," he said, "tell me the truth . . ."

They came quickly up to the bed, and the doctor, whose name was Hugues, put his hands on Jean Mourin's head, turned it to the circle of light and looked deeply into his eyes. The group of students gathered closely round his white coat. The doctor frowned and shook his head gravely.

"Don't be impatient," he said quietly. "You will be told all. Is there anything you want?"

"I want to go away," said Jean Mourin. "Someone must tell my wife at home: at once! I don't know what has happened or why I am here. I feel quite well, perfectly well. Do let me go, doctor: I must go . . ."

He stopped. No one answered him. He noticed a sort of embarrassment in the silence. The doctor and the students seemed astonished to see him cured and to hear his voice: they avoided his question. But he wanted to know the truth: he insisted on it. An accident? What accident? An illness? What kind of illness?

"Don't excite yourself," said Dr. Hugues. "I promise you shall be told when the time comes."

And without a change of voice he turned to the students and added:

"Here we have what no one could have foretold. The older you get the more you will realise that you must reckon with this. Sister Céline, give him everything he wants. But—" and here he spoke with emphasis—"nothing that may excite him. Don't leave anything about, Sister—no newspapers. And—above all—quiet!"

They all went out except the Sister. She gently urged the sick man backward and made him lie down, lowered the lamp for the night and slipped noiselessly out of the room.

Outside the voices disappeared in the distance. Jean Mourin put his hands to his head and began to search for recollections in the obscure corners of his memory. He could not find the shock of any accident, or the feeling of discomfort that goes before an illness. Perhaps a sudden disaster—a fire, a fall, or an attack of madness—had destroyed the past. But apart from the fact that he was lying in a hospital bed he remembered a thousand perfectly connected events that had happened quite recently. Why yesterday, only yesterday, he had been having lunch as usual with his wife. He remembered even their conversation, their everyday conversation about music.

It was after this that there was a gap. A sort of sleep, a sudden dizzy collapse, blackness.

Jean Mourin sat up and turned up the light. He could bear it no longer. His veins were throbbing. He must get up and walk up and down. Anything rather than this immobility, this solitary struggle against the unknown.

He put on the blueish woollen clothes. Mechanically he felt in the pockets. They contained various things that belonged to him: a pencil-holder, a pocket book, a tuning fork, a briar pipe, a bunch of keys, a pair of smoked glasses, a pouch full of tobacco.

Standing up beside the bed he looked at the things which he placed one by one on the quilt: all these possessions seemed old, out of date. They must belong to someone happy and in good health, no longer to him. He shrugged his shoulders, put them all back in his pocket and raising his head looked in front of him.

Opposite, on the wall of the room, by the window against which the rain was ceaselessly beating, was a dressing table and a looking glass. No. 67 went up to the looking glass and suddenly his whole body quivered.

What Jean Mourin saw clearly in the mirror *was the face of an unknown man.*

. . . . . .

Staring into his own face he bent forward till his forehead nearly touched the glass. There were his own eyes, large, brown and a little troubled, and under them livid shadows stretched down towards his cheek. He went over his features one by one, feverishly scrutinising the mask before him, looking for the man that he had been. His beard had grown: short, hard, and grey, his face was framed in it. How white his hair had become—from some shock he supposed. As he carefully examined the face before him he gradually began to recognise his own features: the lines of his forehead, the corners of his lips and the join of the nose were more marked and the face as a whole had grown thinner. His complexion had lost its brightness: it was now a pale yellow fading into nearly white round the temples. His entire forehead seemed to have grown broader and higher, the arch of his eyebrows was harder and more definite while his mouth betrayed an indifference which was in the strangest contrast with the thoughtful and sad expression of his face as a whole.

Nevertheless he remembered clearly the exact appearance of his features. His face was clean shaven and of a rather rustic cast, relieved by his hair, which he wore long in the Liszt manner, as young musicians often will. His hair had been cut short by the same rough hand no doubt that had trimmed his stiff beard

almost level with his face, like a thatch. Who would recognise the composer Jean Mourin under this semblance? Even his wife might find a difficulty.

This reflection suggested another. How did he come to be in a place like this without friend or family by his bedside? Perhaps they did not know he was ill. He would give his address and those of his friends. That would be soon done: he had so few. Lescot, old Lescot, would come at once: he would quickly leave on his table those orchestral scores of his that no player in theatre or concert hall would ever be troubled to make out: he would take up his hat and stick . . .

Though perhaps it might be better to send for Desnoyers the lawyer: he would know how to break the news to Jeanne and prepare her for the sight of a husband so prematurely aged; he would tell her the truth tactfully and without unnecessary abruptness.

The truth! Jean Mourin stood beside his bed and searched for it in vain among the shadows of his recollection. He thought and thought until the effort grew painful.

The mind of the sick man was full of his wife Jeanne, her beloved name, her features, her tenderness. It seemed a long time since he had seen her: and yet it could only be yesterday. He searched his memory again: he struggled in a black chaos. But when he

tried to penetrate the past, always at the same point he came upon this invisible impalpable wall, behind which was hidden what he had to find out, cost him what it might.

Yes, some appalling disaster must have happened to him. But why hide from him what he must sooner or later discover? Was he not well again? Here he was standing up firmly on his legs, nothing the matter with him. Of course. Then why were his wife and friends kept away from him?

But Jean Mourin, his back turned to the windows, could no longer hear the slightest noise outside his room. He stared in vain at the ground glass pane of the door. No shadows passed. He opened it.

Outside was a long corridor and on each side of it to left and right a line of white doors, all numbered. It was like a row of cabins in some great steamer. Some feeble lights faintly illuminated a long strip of carpet. The blinds shook as a sharp wind whistled through them. Just beside Room 67 another corridor turned off at right angles giving on to a deserted stairway a few steps further on. It must be the dinner hour in this white establishment.

The patient found the bell-button, but he thought: "I will ring later on."

By this time he had reached the table and opened the drawer. In it were books, cotton, buttons, and one

of those little linen bags used for drugs and medicaments. Jean Mourin picked it up. It contained some metal objects. Two women's rings, a wedding ring, a pendant, a brooch, a watch-bracelet, a little gold net purse.

Why did Jean feel a blow at his heart? Everything grew dark and yet in the depths of his consciousness there appeared a faint light. In the silence and solitude he stood there awaiting the revelation of some extraordinary event. These jewels, which he balanced in his hands, seemed as though they were in possession of a secret.

Sister Céline and the hospital orderly who came in on their rounds a moment later found Jean Mourin standing up, motionless, like a statue in the darkness. He was holding a handful of jewels in his right hand: he would not answer any question: but he allowed himself to be undressed and put to bed like a child.

. . . . . .

Later on when these hours of anguish had become a mere recollection, Jean Mourin found a note book in one of his pockets. The pages were covered with irregular writing, part of which was indecipherable. Here he had written down his impressions following his awakening at the hospital. A diary without times or dates, of which even the author had lost the thread.

"Where am I?" he wrote. "What hospital is this?

Is it simply a hospital? The people around me seem to have an appearance of curiosity and also of apprehension which suggests a mad-house. I don't know. How should I?"

Here followed some lines crossed out and written over which he could not read. Then:—

"I feel surrounded with lies. They tell me lies: everyone tells lies here, people and things. I feel surrounded by lies as a tree that does not thrive is packed in straw at the end of winter. I have questioned all of them; no use and I have given it up. Even things deceive me. Who put my pipe, my note book, my keys, my tuning fork in the pockets of this hospital uniform? How is it that these are things that belong to me, while I have never seen that stick and pipe and thimble? And when did Jeanne leave her jewels in the room? And why? We aren't rich but we are not poor. The hospital expenses would not trouble us. How is it?

"No answer to my questions, or only evasions."

Three pages savagely scratched out: then:—

"If this is to go on, I shall really go mad. I am well and cured, yet I am not allowed what is never refused to anyone who is ill. I am in complete control of myself. They admit it, but they forbid me the right to communicate with my own people. I cannot write to them. The injunctions of that ruffian Dr.

Hugues are savagely obeyed. And, except the Sisters, everybody in this devilish place is strange to me. The doctor I have never seen again. The student who looks after me looks like a strolling player with that smooth face of his: insolent too!

"What can I do? Escape? I don't know the building and I should certainly be caught before I reached the gate.

"Besides I don't know what is going on outside. Even the date they hide from me. The date! What sort of existence is this? I am a prisoner.

"And always these lies, that I feel everywhere, that stifle my life, and prevent me hearing the voices outside.

"It must stop."

The last pages of the note book were covered with figures and a strange drawing, the sort of thing that the fingers trace unconsciously when the mind is burdened by some gloomy preoccupation.

. . . . . .

When Jean Mourin opened his eyes, on the morning of December 17th, he saw by the side of the student in his hospital jacket an attentive looking young man who seemed to be watching for him to awake. This individual was dressed in country clothes and was sitting down near the window. Jean Mourin looked him over but did not recognise him, and turned to the

student. He had grown so nervous that he said abruptly:

"As you will not leave me alone even when I am asleep you ought to know why I am kept here against my will. Are they going to let me out or not?"

"Perhaps. It is nothing to do with me."

"I don't know why I am treated like this. All these lies, this silence . . ."

"Patience. The doctor will be here in a moment. He wants to talk to you himself."

"Words, nothing but words!"

The young man shook his head without replying. The room was full of a hostile silence. A motor horn sounded outside. A faint cold sunlight spread over the bare whiteness of the wall on the left hand side of the room above the head of the young visitor as he sat there motionless with his bag on his knees.

The sick man lay back again. His head with its greying hair pressed deeply into the pillow: his left hand with unconscious automatic movements twisted and untwisted the point of his beard.

The student, doubtless under orders, did not renew the conversation. But, as the sound of a step was heard he whispered:

"Here he is."

Dr. Hugues came in, followed by Sister Céline, whose cap fluttered like a sail against the sky.

Jean Mourin raised himself up and got a closer view of the doctor. He was a tall man, bald, vigorous, and of a rather forbidding appearance. He spoke in a military tone. Before addressing the sick man, he turned to his student.

"Nothing special?"

"Nothing."

He went up to the bed and seemed to hesitate.

"M. Mourin," he said after a silence, "do you feel strong enough to bear what we have to tell you?"

"I insist on the truth."

"You shall have it. But first I must ask you one question. Do you know how to make clothes? Could you make a garment like this?" He pointed to the hospital overall lying on a chair. "You think the question absurd?"

"Yes, absurd and out of place. You may not know it but I am a musician, quite well off enough to be able to go in for music and nothing else. My wife and I . . ."

"I know. You live at Meilles, near Paris. Yes. I am obliged to go on like this with questions. I am not asking you useless ones. Where do you think you are at this moment—I mean where do you think this house is? . . . Don't try and think. Do you know the Bourg d'Oisans road at Briançon?"

"Certainly."

The doctor stopped, as if to allow the man he was questioning time to recover his memory. Jean Mourin, with a troubled expression, his eyes fixed, was striving to read his own mind. He was now afraid of what might be said. He felt the secret within him surrounded by menace and horror. If he could only disentangle it himself, without help, and without the pain of being told. But he searched his memory in vain and after a silence he could only say, in a trembling voice:

"Yes, I know the Lantaret road. Well?"

"You have been over it?"

"Yes, several times and quite recently."

"In a charabanc?"

"Certainly: what then?"

"You were with your wife?"

"Tell me, tell me, what is it?" cried the sick man.

The voice of the doctor did not change. He pressed his questions with quiet firmness.

"Now listen carefully. The last time, *the other day,* you left your house at Meilles for the Alps. Do you remember what you took with you?"

"Yes, of course. A small trunk and a knapsack."

"And then?"

"We took the nine-o'clock train and then crossed Paris in a cab. At the restaurant at the Lyons Station . . ."

The doctor interrupted.

"I wish you would tell me how you started off in the charabanc. It was . . . ?"

"At Grenoble, in the Place des Alpes, as usual: just like every year when we started for Queyras."

"For Queyras?"

"Yes, of course."

"And . . ." the doctor said slowly, "do you know where you stopped this time?"

Jean Mourin trembled. He felt something like a shock go through him. His staring eyes gazed anxiously and fixedly into those of Dr. Hugues. But the effort soon became intolerable. He still wanted, in a feeble fury to find and push aside the dark presences that kept the secret of his suffering. But his courage and strength failed him. He fell back gasping: but almost at once he sat up again.

Then something seemed to crack inside his head. It seemed as though a curtain had been suddenly drawn back *behind* his eyes: and Jean Mourin, bent and haggard, saw something that was known to him alone. He hid his head between his crossed arms that he might not suffer that vision again.

In a flash he saw it all once more. The departure of the charabanc at dawn in the square at Grenoble with all the lively tumult of the start of the *diligences* in old days. Seated at the side of Jeanne, Jean Mourin

went through the streets of the still sleeping town, and past the military barracks whence came the sound of bugle calls. Then through the gates with their pyramids of cannon balls and on to the road that stretched out before the gaily moving car full of tourists that would never reach their journey's end.

Everything came back to him. The images projected on the screen of his memory grew clear and appeared in a definite succession. The moving landscape, the smoke rising from the hamlets down in the hollow of the valleys, the waterfalls breaking into floury dust over the rocks, the blue vapours and the scent of lavender rising from the Romanche.

The engine roars and hums. The car climbs like a giant insect up the capricious curves of the road, slips through tunnels, and dashes hooting around the bends and over the bridges: the birds begin to twitter. Beyond Les Alberges the road narrows and skirts a precipice along the edge of which is a parapet reaching about knee-high. The *Infernet* it is called. This is the place. Here the journey will end.

While they were all looking at the snowy crests, far away, of the Barre-des-Ecrins, while they were singing and laughing, suddenly the landscape seemed to turn over. The car tipped up, and with a single movement of its huge vertebrae it leapt the parapet,

and for the space of a breath, hung as it were suspended in space.

What followed seemed a mere dizzy confusion. The landscape turns over in the air and changes places with the sky, while the clouds and the blue heaven descend in a whirlwind to take the place of the red and blue carpet of the fields. Immediately the heavy car seems to be rushing up to a ceiling of trees, torrents, and houses while the sky falls away below with fearful, incredible speed. . . . A roof of dark green comes down swiftly on to the car. Bodies fall out, twist and turn round the hurtling mass. The vision cracks and goes blind. The speed of this endless fall increases as it meets a wind that blows from nowhere. Then a blow—a blow of unutterable violence striking the whole body at once.

After that, nothing.

Night.

. . . . . .

Dr. Hugues had put his strong hand on to Jean's shoulder. Silent and grave he waited until Jean had ceased to gasp for breath.

His body was shaken by sobs like a succession of hiccoughs. He wept in paroxysms until he could not breathe, as children do. He called for his wife with confused and agonised words. Suddenly his cries stopped and he lay as if exhausted.

"Is she dead?"

The doctor bent his head.

"Did she suffer?"

"Killed on the spot. You were the only one who escaped, Mourin: you fell first on a stack of straw. You were picked up by some peasants, your head split open, your legs broken and your reason gone. . . . And now try and pull yourself together."

"Yes," he said dully, "I can rely on my courage. I want to go home, doctor."

"Later on, later on. You can't go alone. One of your relatives, your only relation has come to see you."

"Relations," said Jean. "I did not know I had any since . . . My poor wife and I were orphans, without a family. There was only a child . . ."

"As soon as you were cured, the Superintendent had this young fellow here informed. He lives abroad and was in France by accident. Do you recognise him? Come nearer, sir."

The unknown came up to the bed.

"No," said Jean Mourin, "I don't know the young man."

"He is your brother-in-law."

"Who? I don't understand you. My brother-in-law, the brother of my wife?"

"Precisely."

"There is some mistake. Louis Thévenet, of whom you are speaking, was lodging this summer, at the time of the accident, with a country woman just outside Valence. He must be three and a half years old."

The young man stood in the light, with an awkward air and a questioning look at the doctor. The latter seemed to hesitate, then made up his mind.

"Do you remember," he said, "the exact date of the accident?"

"Wait a moment . . . it must have been June 14th."

"In what year?"

"This year, of course."

"And this year is . . ."

"1906."

"Mourin, you will need all your will-power. The time has come to tell you the whole truth. What I am going to say places all of us here outside the common laws of life. That man you see by your bed is really Louis Thévenet, your brother-in-law. Look at him, recognise him. He is going back to Canada tomorrow. Make an effort, as great an effort as you can. It is very important: do you recognise him?"

"I can only say that he is a stranger to me. My wife had a brother. I have told you his age."

Yet he felt uncomfortable. He recognised in the

young man's face the glimmer of another look. Though he spoke with vehemence a doubt began to rise in his mind. He looked again at the so-called Thévenet and then at the doctor. What was this cruel game? Why were they putting him off, ill as he was, with this fresh deception? It was all pretence and concealment in this hospital. At each step Jean came up against invisible barriers, lies, always lies: or, if they were not lies . . .

"Am I losing my reason?" he murmured. "Is my mind so bound up with memories of so long ago that I have forgotten what happened recently? Is that possible, doctor? Isn't it a fact that Louis Thévenet was only a child this summer? Have I been dreaming? Am I still dreaming? Once and for all I want to know everything."

"Well," said the doctor, "here is the truth. You remember the accident, in which you were nearly killed, happened on *June 14, 1906*. You are sure?"

"Yes."

"Read this."

The doctor held out a paper, his finger pointing to a corner of it on which Jean Mourin read *Dec. 17, 1922*.

He made no sign; he lay motionless, unseeing. But he felt as though his heart were going to burst within his breast.

He understood. As the doctor approached him he demanded silence with a gesture. Explanation was useless, it would only make the mystery more formidable. Jean Mourin would have nothing to do with the pathological scaffolding of his case.

He knew the kind of words that learned men throw like melancholy rockets into the darkness of human ignorance. What was the use? Alas, what was the use, since nothing could ever console him for a bereavement over which he had not wept and a life that he had lost. Perhaps he would forget his trouble if, instead of defining it in tortuous phrases, they left him the last resource of uncertainty. Perhaps in the future he might find the tranquility that follows an evil dream when without remembering the moment of his return to reality, the dreamer knows that his agony has passed with the shadows of the night.

"It is my duty . . ." began Dr. Hugues.

"No," cried Jean Mourin. "No, leave me alone."

"This is childish: listen to me. Even if your case seems to you extraordinary, there is nothing to frighten you. . . . I must tell you. . . . It is essential that you should know . . ."

The doctor spoke at length. Jean, stretched on his back, his head lying motionless among the pillows, saw nothing but the pale square of ground glass in the recess straight in front of him. During the whole ex-

planation he lay thus, prostrate, showing no sign that he heard anything.

The student and Sister Céline listened vaguely to the explanation which had so often been repeated in their presence, in that same Room 67, while the doctor was on his rounds. Young Thévenet recognised here and there words from the report which had been sent to him.

"Local transference, a case of dual consciousness, which we at first took for some hysterical impersonation and then for a passing condition of mania. . . . You will find the details of the accident in these papers. Your case, which is fairly common, you know, is one of dual personality supervening on a violent traumatism. Briefly, you have been someone else, until the morning of the 13th December.

"Now you have found yourself again. You remember nothing of the other man. That is an invariable rule. You kept your automatic activities, but nothing else. To be exact, your original self, the one before the accident, left to your intermediate self completely organised processes: walking, manual labour, reading, speech, the use of tobacco. Try and understand me, Mourin. I mean that your double smoked, worked, talked, read the papers, yet a certain number of automatic acquirements did not reach the new self. It was ascertained that you were a talented musician

and an excellent pianist as well. But from that day you did not know your notes and you could not strike a chord. You learnt a trade here—tailoring: it is certain, scientifically certain, that now you would not know how to hold a needle. On the other hand you will find yourself once more able to read music at sight and play the piano as if you had never ceased to do so. The other man, the first self, the real Jean Mourin, has come back."

"Sixteen years," murmured Jean Mourin.

The doctor went on patiently. "If I have made myself clear, you have had two selves. Between your real and present self which you recovered four days ago and the identical self of before June 14, 1906, a strange personality intervened, whom you do not know, who did not know you and whom your cure has destroyed. This personality was morally in no way like you. But there is no need to describe it. You will find all that in the report which will be given you on your discharge. But you are not listening to me, Mourin. You are cured, I tell you, cured."

"Sixteen years," he said, in a voice which sounded to him toneless, far off, a voice coming from some alien throat. "Sixteen years."

He said nothing more. Nothing could be got out of him except these two words. He repeated them mournfully, whether he was alone in Room 67, or in the

bustle of the corridors, among the medical students, the orderlies, the Sisters and the visitors, as he wandered past them like a man walking in his sleep.

Three days went by in this way. The doctor watched his former patient in silence. Jean answered his questions stupidly, shewed ill-temper and a strange susceptibility if any mention was made of the man he had been during his long stay in the place. He seemed to be afraid that he would be regarded as responsible for the actions of this "double." It was no use reassuring him.

"Gervais," said the doctor one day, "was docile, modest, of a very equable temperament, but common and rather furtive."

Jean Mourin started.

"Gervais?" he asked.

"Ah—of course. We had not told you that. As often happens in cases in which the personality is affected, you would not answer to your name. So we had to give you one: we took it from the calendar, the day of your admission to hospital."

"Just like a foundling?"

"Yes. You were brought here, it seems, on the day of St. Gervais. So the name was given to you. You took to it very quickly. For sixteen years, you have been called Gervais."

Jean seemed to be thinking. After this conversa-

tion, he said nothing to anybody. He allowed his brother-in-law to continue his journey to Quebec with a surprising indifference.

A week passed. Jean Mourin spent it in his room, tortured with impatience, irritated by everything that surrounded him, reading and re-reading the diary which, by Dr. Hugues' orders, had been left in his room.

At last, on December 23rd his personal belongings were given back to him, a country suit with a leather belt: he put it on without a word. As he left the room the Sister kissed him with tears in her eyes.

An orderly in felt slippers led him along the corridors to the Superintendent's office. First of all his papers were given back to him, a pocket book with his identity papers.

"And now your letters," said the steward, opening a little package tied with a string and sealed, which disclosed a little bundle of envelopes of faded yellow.

They had been opened, two hundred months before, "by direction of the authorities": about twenty letters. The correspondents had soon grown tired: a man disappears, life goes on, friendship grows weary, the recollection is but a word, even sorrow itself betrays the affections—thus had oblivion woven her veil between his neighbours and himself.

"There are still some more," added the official.

And he handed to Jean a short report by the Superintendent which was in fact his permit of discharge; a kind of diary of his illness, a copy of a communication signed 'Hugues'; and lastly a burial certificate signed by the Mayor of Bourg d'Oisans, where by the arrangement of Mâitre Desnoyers, notary at Mielles, administrator of his estate, Jeanne Thévenet, wife of Mourin, had been buried, with a concession for thirty years.

To Jean, awake and cured, these were like the events of a dream. He felt as if he had seen it all before. All these gestures and voices seemed far off, slow and deliberate, bathed in that veiled light that envelops the unreal and the mechanical.

Jean put everything they gave him into his pockets, one after the other, and then buttoned up his waterproof overcoat. Without turning back he crossed the courtyard and reached the open door of the hospital.

The porter, in his lodge, had his back to the window and was reading a paper. Jean slipped out as if he were escaping.

He carried away with him the vision of patients perambulating the galleries, and invalid chairs in which were stretched out somnolent beings covered with shawls.

Jean found himself in an avenue. A cold hard wind like the edge of a spade rasped along the pavement.

In front of him was a wall, and in the middle a gate with a pediment bearing the legend "Arsenal" in tarnished gilt letters. Above it the figured dial of a clock stared down. Some hurrying passers-by and a few dogs came and went along some palings.

A bleak prospect—this sordid suburb, which called to mind pauper funerals and discharges from prison. But Jean Mourin put his bag on the ground. Then raising his head to the sky, he took off his hat, wiped his forehead, and breathed deeply.

II

He walked a few steps along the pavement. On the right the clear and icy waters of the Isère slipped by. A boulevard crossed the avenue. In the distance, straight in front of him, Jean noticed the station. He had only one desire: to escape from the place as soon as possible, get back to his own corner of the Paris suburb and try and take up his life again. He felt trapped. Nothing could have kept him at Grenoble. He began to walk very quickly, driven by a fear of missing by a few minutes the first train to Paris.

Indifferent to his surroundings, he went on, though his clothes made him feel awkward. In spite of his haste he hesitated, feeling the asphalt with his feet, like a man who has lost his sense of space. Yet he passed unnoticed. All along the station avenue people were hurrying to their lunch.

Jean avoided them with a kind of aversion. All that he could imagine about the life that was before him, its excitement, its variety and its difficulties, left him indifferent. What more had he to learn? The diary of his illness which he had read twenty times

over in the solitude of his room at the hospital had exhausted his powers of astonishment.

The war? Ah, yes, the war; and then?

He could only find room in his heart for an immense weariness and the egotism of the convalescent. Should he try and reconstruct for himself, retrospectively, the emotions of that time, imagine its splendours and its horrors, grasp its place in human affairs, he, Jean Mourin, the only living being who had never for one moment felt its reality? What was the use? He accepted it as a whole. He believed that he had, in a few days, learnt all that he had to learn. And now he cleared his mind of everything which did not help his wild desire to live and to forget. No suffering could exceed his own. After all, what was the metamorphosis of the world compared with the miracle of his own resurrection?

The station hall was nearly deserted and the ticket office was shut. Jean Mourin looked at the time table on the wall. The Paris Express left at twelve minutes past four. Twelve o'clock had just struck.

In spite of his nervousness Jean made up his mind to sit down alone in the waiting room. He knew very well that nothing could defeat his impatience, yet in a confused sort of way, he was afraid of everything that might distract him from his thoughts.

The variegated pile of newspapers did not tempt

him. He sat on the green velvet bench and waited, his chin on the knob of his stick.

Outside a couple came across the square. The woman, tall and graceful, was leaning on the arm of her companion, a thoughtful looking young man of about thirty.

"My age," thought Mourin.

He had to make an effort to grasp the certainty of the time that had gone by: he was a widower of forty-four.

He owed his departed wife sixteen years of pious recollection.

. . . . . .

Beloved Jeanne, Jeanne, his tender and innocent companion, his chosen sister, his fellow-orphan. A common love of music had brought them together, and then thrown them breathless into each other's arms. Their married years had been a long wandering together outside the reality of life, a sad and mournful holiday, a sort of melodious autumn of which they had been the affected and entranced spectators. He burst into tears.

However, the station began to show signs of life. People came out of the refreshment room. Cabs and motor cars came up with travellers and luggage. From the end of the square soldiers going on leave approached in groups. On the line a train moved backwards and

forwards with an obstinate slowness under its clouds of smoke. The prolonged whistles from the engine composed a rhythm with the warning bells of the luggage-cars. Very soon the waiting room was full and Mourin was almost astonished to hear the travellers talking about their vulgar troubles, quarrelling loudly and, in the French way, full of accusations against important personages who were not present. A thin individual with his tie undone was disputing with some official. No one answered him and he went on to the platform. Jean Mourin left the waiting room to join the queue which was lining up outside a ticket office. His turn came.

"One first for Paris," he said.

"Single?"

"Yes, single."

A corpulent gentleman and an army captain entered his compartment after him. The train moved off. Jean looked through the window at the bare and snowy country which he had seen only the day before—as it seemed—sparkling with sun and foliage. The light was falling. With a long whistle the train entered the Voirans Tunnel, by the end of which the heavy darkness of a December evening had come. Jean put his alpine hat on the seat and fell asleep at once.

At Lyons the carriage was attached to the Paris

Express without his noticing it. He did not wake up till after Laroche, about three in the morning. He felt very cold. The train was running through the night. One passenger, rolled up in his rug was snoring with his mouth open. The officer was smoking a pipe in the corridor with an impatient air.

It was five o'clock and pitch dark when Jean found himself on the platform of the Lyons Station. A creaking taxi took him across to the Est Station. He had some breakfast at the buffet. It was his first meal for twenty-four hours.

. . . . . .

When he got out at Meilles, dawn was breaking, a reddish ill-looking dawn, threatening snow. The station was some distance outside the village and overlooked it. The road lay along the wall of a park and up a slope leading to the steps of the church.

Jean Mourin, who had not long—before his accident—settled in the village, knew only two people; the school master Segard, of the same age as himself, twenty-seven, and the lawyer Desnoyers, an old gentleman of much learning and friend of his late uncle Claude Mourin; it was he who had advised his nephew to buy the villa in which he had been living for a few months in 1906.

Among the papers which the steward of the hospital had handed to Jean when he left was a form of

release for his property signed by the magistrate at Grenoble and stating that the key of the villa was in the hands of the administrator of his estate, the notary of Meilles.

The office was at the far end of a garden court behind an iron gate. Jean Mourin rang. A young clerk ran up.

"Is Mâitre Desnoyers up yet?"

The young clerk looked with surprise at this early visitor who was so ill-informed.

"Mâitre Desnoyers," he answered after some hesitation, "died in 1910. His family has left the neighbourhood. Mâitre Brondin has succeeded him. Would you like to see him?"

"Yes."

He followed the lad across the court and was ushered into a room in which a log fire was crackling. Nothing was changed: the roll-top desk, the files of papers, the gay display of notices—all were there.

"Whom shall I say?"

"M. Jean Mourin, owner of 'The Willows.' "

The lad looked at him and went. In a moment a door opened and the lawyer came in. His face betrayed an anxiety which, with a self-control proper to men of his condition, he attempted as an official of the State, to disguise. Clearly he was amazed at the reappearance of this client. In 1910, when he had

bought the practice, "The Willows" was already called "the madman's" house. And here was the madman himself, a man growing grey, of composed appearance but with an expression of indescribable desolation.

In response to an awkward gesture from the lawyer, the visitor sat down. A silence fell. Jean waited motionless with his hands spread on his knees.

"Monsieur," said the lawyer at last, "I congratulate you on your recovery. I am glad to see you, to see you again, I should rather say, because I paid you a visit at Grenoble, of which you have no doubt no recollection. In 1911: let me see, was it in 1911?

Jean looked at his pale face traversed by a pepper-coloured moustache. The face was quite unknown to him and yet there was a vague something . . .

Mâitre Brondin went on:

"My late predecessor was, if I am rightly informed, a friend of your family. It was on those grounds that he was appointed administrator of your estate by a family council of your friends at the time of your—your accident. I have been notified of the release of your property and I have myself notified the Superintendent of the hospital. All that I have to do now is to give an account of my administration. This formality can be disposed of as soon as you like—say on Thursday."

"Very well, Thursday," said Jean, with the air of a man half asleep, and following a business conversation with difficulty.

"I can tell you here and now that your securities are deposited with the Discount Bank in Paris. Your property, although uninhabited and damaged by wear and tear, has about trebled in value. Propositions for the purchase of 'The Willows' have often been made to me. It is a pleasant property for which you would find many buyers, especially now. But the law, as you no doubt know . . ."

"No," interrupted Jean, "and I do not want to know. I want to keep the place."

"Very good," acquiesced the lawyer.

He went to the safe. He produced the key of the house which was tied on to the tape surrounding a bundle of redeemed mortgages on certain properties in the neighbourhood.

"I have no doubt of your identity, Monsieur," Mâitre Brondin went on, "but . . ."

"Here are the papers."

The lawyer took them, looked at them carefully and composedly.

"The law does not permit the accounts of the administration being closed until an interval of ten days has elapsed. As regards the mortgages which have been redeemed in your absence, I have the money at

your disposal. You would like, I expect, to go to your house at once. Here is your key."

"Thank you," said Jean Mourin in a softened tone. "I am delighted to make your acquaintance" (and he held out his hand which the other took) "but I would sooner have received these matters from Mâitre Desnoyers, who was one of my few friends and had known me as a child!"

"I quite understand."

After a silence the lawyer got up and said:

"I will send someone with you."

"No, thank you. I wish to be alone."

. . . . . .

One of the witnesses of his old life had gone. The news of the old man's death, already far off and forgotten, was a fresh blow to Jean Mourin. He had so few connections.

At Meilles he only knew Mâitre Desnoyers and Segard the schoolmaster, whose taste for music brought him nearly every evening to the villa.

Little groups of children were going along to school. Jean questioned them. Segard had been killed in the first days of the war. They knew by heart the story of his death which the new master had made them learn like a lesson.

Desnoyers, dead of old age in his office: Segard killed on the field of battle. Mourin felt as if a little

of his own self had vanished, like smoke, into the past. And there would be no longer a face that he knew at Meilles. He had lived so much in the happy dream of his love, that he had hardly noticed the faces of the inhabitants, and since then they had grown worn and faded, marred and pale, and would not arouse in him a single recollection. He would as easily have recognised the farm carts and machines which still stood in the same places under the sheds, with their tapering shafts pointing up to the beams.

Everything seemed to centre round the house that he remembered. What connections had he outside the place? Ten or twelve at the outside. This was all his acquaintance after an orphaned youth spent in the parish of his uncle Mourin, a wealthy priest in La Vendée who had died in 1905 and whose money he had inherited. Now that the lawyer was dead and the school master killed, he had only these few scattered friends, nearly all musicians or interested in music.

There was old Lescot, an old bachelor in Paris, friend of Desnoyers and Uncle Claude, who composed operas and symphonies in the leisure allowed him by his profession of accountant: a relation of Jeanne, Madame Pagès, a lady of independent means living at Rouen: an obscure organist, named Baborier, living in the Latin Quarter: three clerks, Philiponneau, Marge, and Bourbon, his neighbours at the Hotel du

Jura in the rue Monsieur Le Prince, when he first came to Paris: a priest, the Abbé Dufour, precentor at St. Philippe du Roule: the manager of a bank in the rue St. Lazare: this was the entire catalogue of his friends.

Nearly all of them had written to him soon after his accident. Theirs were the faded letters that had been handed to him when he left the hospital. None of them was dated later than 1907.

"What has become of them all?" thought Jean.

The children stopped by the wall of the school and watched this unknown traveller. And Mourin reflected that at the time of his departure, which for him was so recent, these young people were not born. With these thoughts in his mind, he reached the black and rusty gate of his house. It creaked as he opened it. He went in.

. . . . . .

It was like an abandoned cemetery. Tall grasses shivered in the wind. Along the walls of the front garden the outstretched arms of the fruit trees looked like great bats. It was a garden without an owner. The brambles had grown so high that in the middle of winter, when the frost was on them they formed a solid mass. Moss had grown over the seats and corroded the paths. Stones fallen from the borders of the beds lay like fragments of pavement under the wil-

derness of plants. Flights of starlings swept with a soft flutter across the sky.

To get into the house Jean Mourin pushed aside the network of shoots and thorns. The paint on the door and the shutters had all come off long ago, and everything had a mouldy tint: over every aperture, and on the rusty pump-handle, were spiders' webs, blackened and frayed by time.

The key turned with difficulty in the lock and when the door opened the house gave out a sort of fetid sigh.

Jean entered as if he were going into a tomb.

A leaden-coloured covering carpet of dust lay over the floor of the hall on which the tracks of mice had left symmetrical patterns. In the room which he entered, a thin light covering without a fold seemed to envelop everything. As the shutters were thrown back Jean felt a shock. Everywhere were the signs of a hurried departure. In this room, as in his own heart, the timepiece of his life had suddenly stopped. And at the same time it was the only place in the world that could give Jean this feeling: and he felt it with all the force with which an anxious mind sees a truth which no one understands.

Through the half open doors of a cupboard he saw a heap of collars and ties. A half smoked cigarette lay in an ash-tray on the mantelpiece. The floor was

strewn with pieces of paper, and an umbrella which it had been finally decided not to take was leaning against the wall. A newspaper was still lying open on the table. Jean picked it up and, blowing off the dust which covered it, he read, "June 11, 1906 . . . Grand Prix day: Spearmint wins. M. Ephrussi summoned to M. Fallières. Suicide of the poet Charles Frémine. Earthquake in Calabria. King Sisowath lands at Marseilles. Mobilisation test on the line Nérac to Mont-de-Marsan. Exhumation of the ashes of Waldeck Rousseau." Also a record of a debate in the Chamber and an account of a fight between two cabmen.

Mourin read with eagerness. He knew that for him *alone* these forgotten events represented living and present reality. Who remembered Sisowath, the ashes of Waldeck Rousseau, the victory of Spearmint? All this had no existence. What was left of it? Neither more nor less than the drops of rain which had fallen on the race course as M. Fallières arrived, on the coffin of the dead minister, on the cloak of the Cambodian king.

But he, Jean, was familiar with every detail of these events, which he had discussed *yesterday* with Desnoyers and Segard, who had been dead for several years. But were they dead? Was not this newspaper, these commonplace items, the truth of the visible world reconstituted once more? As he read the paper Jean

saw again the succession of persons and events which the unexpected revelation of his injury had severed without altogether destroying. Why, all this was quite recent! Six thousand days and six thousand nights, fallen into the abysm of his sleep, had lasted but the interval between his departure from that room and the moment when the charabanc fell over the parapet on the *Infernet*.

Since then Jean, *the true Jean, had lived for three days and the paper that he held in his hand was three days old.*

The other, the false Mourin, "Gervais the tailor," did not belong at all to this past. He was merely a dream, without body and without persistence. Could a doctor's science, even the changes of the world, prevail over truths of which Jean was as certain as of the beating of his heart? All that he had learnt of a new life since his awakening was no more than a pale light obscured by a vast illumination. These were awful thoughts. Was he to be overwhelmed "in further madness by these frightful perplexities?"

Where did dreams end and reality begin? What meaning for a living mortal man has an invisible succession of days that he has not lived, that another, in his own body, has lived in his stead? What is such time? Nothing. Not even the duration of a second.

A heavy dreamless sleep, the thick night of death—nothing.

Jean drew back before these mysteries. He was filled with dizzy secrets. As he stood in the extraordinary silence of his house where the sound of his steps, deadened by the dust, had as yet awakened no echoes, he felt himself the prisoner of invisible prisoners. He was surrounded by his contemporaries who had died, while he himself was outside humanity, as dead as a dead man, wandering in the shadowy country of madness whence the traveller, if he returns, brings back no more recollections than a departed soul arising from the clay would bring back from the blind and deaf world to which the sexton had consigned him.

The piano was at the end of the room, ponderous and tarnished, standing on its four feet like some grey beast in a museum. Jean opened it, trembling. The keyboard shone, new and bright, in the heavy light of this dusty tomb. Why not play, shake off the obsession of this silence, and—who knows?—by the help of the emotions of music, live once more his real life, the far off and yet recent past which he carried in his soul, that was no longer one but two.

Jean sat down. He laid his fingers on the ivory keys, and the vibrations of a chord that sounded false and sickly broke into the silence.

The chord died away: and the echo that came back sounded padded and heavy, as if weighed down by sleep. Jean struck the keys again, and then began to play mechanically. He played to the shadows that floated round him that song of Rollinat that Jeanne had been so fond of, full of a sensual bitterness and laden with a mortal sorrow. The air could hardly be distinguished. It seemed like a forest of sounds cut into by the heavy strokes of the bass.

Jean, dazed by sorrow and by recollection, dared not look behind him. He felt as though the magnetism of the sounds had drawn her back again: her beloved and sorrowful presence was surely moving in that shadowy corner behind a ray of dusty light. He managed to control himself at last, and turned. Nothing, nothing but solitude. He covered his forehead with his hands and walked quickly up and down the room, feverish and distraught. The baffling truth of his recovery and the deception of his madness lay before and behind him like two abysses. He felt himself grow pale, and staggered. A tarnished mirror hung over a sideboard: he could see nothing but the shadow of a man wearing a hat and with so wild an expression that he looked as if he had been caught intruding in his own house.

On either side of the oval mirror were two portraits: his mother whom he had never known, and his uncle

Claude with his clerical bands under his chin. Both their faces looked down at him with a gaze of penetrating but revealing melancholy. Little by little Jean began to grasp the secret which, in his illness and his recovery lay behind the infinite and cruel impossibility of his destiny. Fifteen years of his life had passed, fruitless as the rain that falls on rivers. Outside and far away humanity with its even tread had gone forward a few steps on the road of time.

And Jean, alone among the millions of the living, had stayed behind, forsaken, forgotten, betrayed, like a dead man.

. . . . . .

He went towards the window and lifted the curtain. It looked out on a street corner. Passers-by came and went. Some of them, who knew what had happened, looked up at the "House of the Madman," and met Jean's eyes. Not a face that he knew.

For the first time Jean realised that he had not met a soul that he knew from the time he left the bed at the hospital until he had reached the gate of "The Willows."

"I must speak to somebody: I must have some friendly voice to celebrate my return. Tomorrow without fail I shall go to Paris."

He had spoken out loud and the sound of his voice dispelled the kind of trance that had seized him. At

the same moment there came over him a loneliness so awful that no living man had ever known the like. And he felt something cold fall upon his shoulders, something inert that rustled like a shroud.

PART II

I

Monsieur Lescot, accountant to the Marble-Cutters' Company, lived in two small rooms in the Rue de Fontarabie, in that part of it that juts out like a promontory between the Rue de Bagnolet and the Rue des Orteaux. Jean Mourin knew his lodging well. The dining room of an old artist, with its decoration of presentation wreaths, discoloured photographs and a mask of Beethoven: out of this opened a melancholy looking recess with a bed in it, a narrow kitchen, and a little sitting room, smelling of wood fires and pipe-smoke.

Here M. Lescot would discourse at length of his disappointments. Everyone in the neighbourhood knew him. All the year round he walked home from his office in the Boulevard de Charonne, and took his napkin from its pigeon-hole in a little restaurant in the Rue des Orteaux. He ate his dinner, climbed up six flights of stairs and shut himself up till the following day. He composed music. Some dozen of his friends considered he had genius but they could not get him known. No conductor would ever undertake his works. Obscure, industrious, and without vices, M. Lescot

opened the door to the friends of his art, whom he called his pilgrims, and, without waiting to be asked, played to them arrangements for the piano of his symphonies and lyrical dramas.

Jean Mourin and his wife formed part of the little circle which, every Saturday, gathered round the piano of this unrecognised composer. Jeanne sang. Her warm, pure contralto emphasised the flow of the melody, breathing a mysterious spell over the little group. Lescot and his guests used to be quite overcome by it.

What had become of all these odd visitors? Jean wondered as he walked along. He tried to get used to the reality of time. According to his recollection his last visit to Lescot had taken place the week before, but his reason, in deference to the evidence of the facts, assured him that it was sixteen years ago. And in future he would have to carry out this troublesome readjustment in every action of his life.

Thus reflecting, he approached the Rue de Bagnolet living once again more vividly the past that everyone had forgotten but which was for him so near and so alive.

Two days before their departure on the fatal journey Jean and his wife had been to visit the old man. In their honour he had played to them the second movement of a sonata. This was on June 9th, 1906. Yet

Jean Mourin, though he had hardly reached his old friend's house, could smell already the odour of tobacco and wood smoke: he could see, as if it were yesterday, the panorama of roofs and chimneys stretching away below the windows, and, far off, the paths and borders and vaults of Père Lachaise like a draughtboard with squares of white and pink and green.

He felt deeply moved. Among his few old friends Lescot was the one who had written most frequently to the hospital. He urged Jean to get well and as soon as he had done so to come along to the Rue de Fontarabie. Then he had grown tired. The last letter was dated 1907.

Jean knocked at the porter's door. The concierge did not know of any Lescot. An Armenian soldier's family was living in the apartment that the visitor described on the fifth floor.

"Since when?" said Jean.

"Since about the armistice."

"And before that?"

The concierge thought for a moment.

"Before that," she said, "there was a Monsieur Husson who was arrested."

"Had he been there long?"

"How should I know?" said the concierge impatiently. "I haven't always been looking after this house. But since I've been here I've never heard the

name of Lescot, and that is all I can tell you. Is it a long time since you came to see him last?"

"Sixteen years."

The concierge thought he was laughing at her and was going to shut the door, but she was touched by Jean's sad expression.

"You should ask the bootmaker on the third floor. He has lived in the building a long time and he could tell you . . ."

The bootmaker looked at Jean over his spectacles.

"Lescot," said he, "old Lescot? He died in 1910, on the evening of All Saints Day. He was found on the ground, half paralysed, just in front of the door of the cellar. It didn't last long: in two days he was done for."

Jean Mourin went away. Although the circumstances of the old man's death distressed and upset him, the news itself hardly surprised him. Of course it would be so. Something warned him, a kind of presentiment that had troubled him ever since he had left Meilles: all his attempts would end in similar disappointments.

Thus everywhere that Jeanne and he had been, others had come whose footprints had effaced theirs: and others had gone who, in a forgetful world had left no trace behind them. Death gave him the measure of time. It seemed to him natural and even encourag-

ing that during Mourin's sleep others should have grown up, changed and grown old: at any rate it strengthened his will to live and go among his fellows. But these deaths that came upon him one after another shook him like the bereavements that await a traveller after a long absence: it pained him to think that he had not done all his duty towards these people who were dead and who had been buried before his return. And the thought of it, while he made further enquiries in other places, made him realise most vividly his strange position.

Paris was moving at top-speed, and in every part of the city Jean Mourin thought he was in the centre of a whirlwind. All round him were hooting motor-cars. As he crossed from the pavement to a refuge he felt hemmed in by noise and movement.

In the Place de la République he took a motorbus. He hated the jostling people on the footboard but his mind was full of a kind of expectation. A heavy sky brooded over the city: rusty looking clouds seemed to be overhanging the roofs of the houses. He looked at the crowd and watched the streams of people passing in the street. A dry cold enlivened everyone and kept the loiterers moving. Jean got off near the Opera and took his place in the stream of passers-by. One thing astonished him: his shrunken suit, his flowing necktie, and his cloak with its narrow braid round

the edge, did not attract any attention. Doubtless he was taken for some foreign dealer.

He soon grew tired of walking and hailed a cab. What would be his next discovery?

A surprise awaited him. Madame Pagés, the lady of independent means, was not dead. At least no one knew that she was. Some years back the old lady had left to join a relation in the country, like herself old and widowed. But where? The concierge did not know, as her predecessor had lost the book which contained the addresses of previous lodgers.

Jean Mourin pressed her.

"But supposing it were a matter of importance"— The concierge could offer no help. What was he to do? The house was at the end of Saint Ange alley. It was no use asking the tradesmen of the neighbourhood. Yet Jean Mourin could not make up his mind to go away.

"We have never heard the lady's name since we have been in the lodge," the concierge went on, "though, wait a minute: until the end of last quarter there was a lodger who had lived here for more than twenty years. He left last year after the death of his daughter, and I believe he is living in a boarding house. One moment . . . here it is. Rouaix, Pension Célestine, Rue du Ranelagh. I should go and see him."

"I know him," said Jean.

He thanked her and went away. M. Rouaix was concluding his existence in an armchair, staring at the fire.

"Madame Pagés," he said. "Yes, I knew her well; she was very religious and only priests went to see her. A dear good lady, a little older than I am. Where does she live now? Why, at St. Brieuc. No, not St. Brieuc: I'm wrong. St. Omer or St. Nazaire, I think. St. Brieuc, what made me think of that? . . ."

Jean left the old man mumbling to himself. In spite of everything he still kept a vague hope of finding one or other of the people he was looking for. After a hasty lunch in a dairy in the Rue de Boulainvilliers, he called at the addresses of his remaining friends. Their houses, which Jean remembered, were in various parts of Paris.

From Passy he went to the Quinze-Vingts, and from the Quinze-Vingts to the Goutte d'Or. At each turning and at every crossing there was something unfamiliar. The whole day was a long voyage of discovery. He was greatly astonished, though less so than he had previously thought he would be. His breathless expeditions soon accustomed him to the rhythm of this unknown city. His obsession did the rest. If, in all this noise, only a few cabmen reminded him of the Paris he had known, the change struck him chiefly because of the freshness of his recollections. That was the secret. He had been there too lately and

the absence of perspective diminished, in his eyes, the changes. He did not feel that he was in a strange town: it seemed rather as if he had suddenly come upon everything in the midst of one of those preparations for a fête which change in a few hours the appearance and movement of a city.

Besides he was soon deep in his search once more. His motives were gradually changing. A kind of pride not unmixed with anger was now driving him forward. Was it really possible in so few years to disappear without anyone keeping even the recollection of one's shadow? Was the distance between Paris of 1906 to Paris of 1922 so great as that? Hardly the age of a youth.

A fresh disappointment shewed him the uselessness of his present attempts, and it occurred to him to consult the directory. He was discouraged by the fact that he could not find the name of any of his friends. They were, in general, little people who would not appear in such publications.

He went on again.

Everywhere the same surprise and the same replies. It seemed almost ridiculous to do so, but he went to the Hotel du Jura in the Rue Monsieur-le-Prince where at the time of his accident, two clerks were living whom he had met at old Lescot's. The hotel had disappeared. Jean met his disappointment without emotion: he was incapable of feeling any further blow.

The only person of whom he found any fairly recent traces was M. Baborier, the organist. Jean discovered that he had nearly died of cold in 1917 in his small lodging in the Rue de Buci. He recovered by a miracle and almost as soon as he was out of hospital he was seen trotting backwards and forwards between the parish where he played the organ and the library of the Conservatoire. He coughed and grew thin, until he almost floated in air in his beggarly old overcoat. For four years he carried on. No one knew what kept him alive. In October 1921 he took to a publisher, who accepted it, his completed manuscript of a History of the Gregorian Chant. Then he died.

An old man, a friend of the organist, told Jean the story in the hall of his lodging.

"Are you a relation?" he asked.

"No," Jean replied.

He stammered his thanks and excuses. He began to understand that the life and death of M. Baborier did not interest him. What he was looking for all over Paris was a face that he knew, a voice that he had heard. He now realised that he would not find them. To discharge his conscience he went to see the Curé of St. Philippe du Roule. The Abbé Dufour had gone to Rome to attend to his duties as Vicar of S. Louis-des-Français.

. . . . . .

Night was falling, rainy and menacing. Jean, mov-

ing with the crowds in the Rue Royale, felt a weariness that he could not overcome. The cold, which whipped up the passers-by and hurried them along, did not touch him. On the contrary he was conscious of a clammy and disagreeable warmth under his clothes. He sat down at the Café Weber which he used to frequent in old days.

People came in and went out: the revolving door turned ceaselessly. All who entered went straight to a group of friends or to a woman who was powdering her cheeks while she waited.

Not a face that he knew. Jean looked in vain at all these people—not one of whom knew of his existence. They were business men and people connected with the theatre. And there were others, countless others, in Paris and all the world, who were keeping appointments, shaking hands, and mingling their lives with those of their fellowmen.

The waiters slipped dexterously between the groups, the café was full of the clatter of saucers and spoons. The noise of the street penetrated in bursts as fresh people passed through the door. Some were called to the telephone. To Jean it seemed like some fête and to be present at it in this way, alone, lost, and silent, increased his melancholy.

He began to look at his neighbours with more atten-

tion, observing particularly those who seemed to be about his own age at the time of the accident. But he soon grew tired. All their faces seemed like masks without features, like coins with their effigies effaced, like the vacant faces on old playing-cards. And there were millions of others like that in the world. Millions of faces who would look at him without changing their expression. Wherever he went, whatever he did, not a living soul henceforward would ever greet him by his name. As far as society was concerned, Jean Mourin, after sixteen years of absence, was wiped out, as if he had been buried for a thousand years.

He tried to find some pleasure in his bitterness, but to his surprise, all he felt was a dreamy dejection. Yet he was fond of solitude. He had grown up alone, in the company of a priest, who had been misanthropic almost to madness, and he had never wanted companions in his games or young friends. His wife, an orphan like himself, avoided company. From the day of their marriage they had lived fiercely alone. When, after the death of Uncle Claude, they bought the villa at Meilles, it was to shut themselves more closely in the silence of their love. They had lived for their affection and for music.

. . . . . .

Jean began to dream. Their love, their evenings

together . . . The confused movement of the café seemed enveloped in a mist, and Jean, with his elbows on the table, his chin in his hands, found himself back at Meilles one evening at the end of the dim room where the lamp shed a deep reflection of motionless light on to the ebony of the piano. Jeanne was singing. Her form seemed surrounded by a sort of halo, and Jean could see once more the beautiful, weary, pale face, moved a little by the passion of the music. One evening she was singing . . . : in all the clatter of the Café Weber he reconstructed this evening of long ago, so near and yet so far away——: she was singing. The room, softly lighted, enclosed its tiny illumination and the sound of her ardent voice, in the midst of the dark enveloping silence of the country. Jeanne was standing by the piano and Jean was playing:

The foliage is fading, the hum of the insects grows hoarse
The swallow sobs
And disappears on the pale horizon.

It was a song of Rollinat, haunting and sad. An arpeggio of notes followed the melody, hurrying down on it as though to stifle the woman's voice repeating the despairing lover's call—she who will not die without having loved once more.

Come let us gather one more lovely day
In despite of time that is breaking us,
And let us mingle the farewell to our love
With the last perfumes of the breeze.

It was her singing of the song on that evening that he chose to remember, the sweet cadences of her voice that he could still hear in his heart: with a sort of presentiment she had loved this song better than more distinguished pieces which did not bear the signs of fate.

It was only yesterday: . . . they had left the room silently as their lips met, locked in a deep embrace: without a word they reached the bed in the alcove and sank down on it, clothed as they were, still trembling, his mouth on hers. And the morning found them still lying on the bed which they had not disturbed.

On other days, other nights, Jean abandoned all control and plunged with the ardour of despair into the memories which made his grief more living and more cruel. He felt too, once more, that need of solitude that had united him and Jeanne outside the world and outside life. The few friends whom they had in Paris were a burden on them. They reproached themselves often for their neglectfulness and paid a few visits. But they always agreed not to make new acquaintances.

Jean Mourin sank into gloomy meditation. The crowd became so dense that newcomers could not find a place. Some common fellow came and sat down opposite him, addressed the waiter with familiarity, and made it clear that his friends would soon be joining him. Jean Mourin paid and got up. The other,

overcome by his own rudeness, stammered some excuses. But Jean was anxious to get out.

At the Madeleine crossing a clock that was lighted up reminded him of the time of his train. Should he go back to Meilles?

His mind full of thoughts of Jeanne, he pictured to himself the dark and hostile station, the roads, and the house. At that time the village was hidden beneath the rain driving in gusts through the night. To hurry through the darkness, a shadow crossing the feeble light from the shop-windows and arrive alone, chilled and desolate, in those rooms where beloved memories were burning out and mingling their ashes with the dust of years . . . Jean shivered. The utter loneliness appalled him because in his mind it was peopled with images.

In any case, he thought, I shall have to go back tomorrow, there is no use going for one night.

He decided to dine somewhere near the Exchange and to sleep at a hotel. Anything was welcome that rescued him from the evil power of his recollections.

The restaurant that he chose at a venture had only a few customers in the evening: bachelors who were eating alone, for the most part, with a newspaper propped against their bottle of wine.

Some young couples were climbing up a circular staircase to the room above. The proprietor, with a

napkin under his arm, moved from table to table, offering advice to the diners. The food was mediocre. But there was something warm and familiar about the atmosphere that Jean liked. Nobody seemed to notice his old-fashioned clothes nor the distracted appearance of the unknown customer. And Jean, finding satisfaction in an incognito, registered at the hotel under a borrowed name.

He took an immediate liking to the "Pheasant" Hotel, a clean and quiet house in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. The floor was like that of a country inn and his heels clattered as he moved about. Pale gleams of light were reflected from the furniture. Curtains hung down in thick folds from the canopy over the bed. Jean Mourin undressed and lay down. Sleep began to steal over him and, in the last glimmer of consciousness, only the last hours of that harassing day were present to his mind.

. . . . . .

On the following day about eight o'clock he took the train for Meilles. The lawyer Brondin was awaiting him in the study, and his colleague Deschavannes was also present, a cadaverous old gentleman, afflicted by a nervous twitching, who occupied himself by warming his hands at the iron stove during the entire interview.

M. Brondin put on a serious expression. A file of

papers lay open on his desk. He drew a chair forward and began his explanations.

"When the magistrates at Grenoble placed you and your effects under restraint on September 14th, 1906, your estate was worth about three hundred and twenty thousand francs, in personal and real property, as follows:

"Your house 'The Willows' valued at thirty-five thousand francs: some land at Bourneau-Mervent in the Vendée, rather more than six acres in extent, valued at twelve thousand francs: various sums lent to certain landowners in Meilles, through the agency of my predecessor, and covered by mortgages, amounting to ten thousand francs in all."

"Quite right:" Jean Mourin interrupted.

"Your holdings of stocks and shares, of which I have the statement here, was as follows: five shares in the Bank of France, ten bonds on the Bank of Portugal, twenty shares in the Suez Company, four hundred Russian Government bonds of 1867, three hundred of 1906, three hundred Paris Municipals 1878, and sixty Northern Railway bonds. On September 15th, 1906, these holdings amounted to two hundred and sixty-two thousand one hundred and twenty-five francs. Now I must inform you that stocks belonging to persons under restraint must be inscribed and not bearer bonds. M. Desnoyers dealt with the matter. In short the

Russian holdings had to be replaced by bonds of the Bank of Agriculture and Government stock. To sum up, your personal property has diminished in value by about thirty-two per cent. You will be able to judge by the abstract of accounts which I have here. I hasten to add that the sum total of your property has increased, in the first place by the amount of interest accruing, after subtracting the cost of your treatment in hospital, taxes, and various outlays, and secondly by the increase in the value of your real property, especially of your house 'The Willows.' I should judge that the value of this property has almost quadrupled since the time when you purchased it under the advice of M. Desnoyers."

The lawyer detailed with complacency the operations carried out by his predecessor, and, his eyeglasses in his hand, he emphasised the happy results of so able an administration. M. Deschavannes here observed:

"M. Mourin's financial affairs could not have been better managed."

"I quite agree," answered Jean Mourin.

He seemed to have heard these words somewhere else. But where? M. Brondin had admitted that he had paid a visit to Grenoble a long while back. Jean thought he could recognise his short-sighted blinking eyes, his gestures and the sound of his voice. Absurd

yet consuming uncertainties. Jean made an effort and shook them off.

Henceforward there was an alertness in his expression which surprised M. Brondin. Could this be the client, who, three days before, had been incapable of giving his attention to an official statement of his case. Here he was, turning over the documents relating to the administration of his affairs. He asked for further information on various points. The lawyer explained, not without a certain professional pride, the law affecting persons under restraint and how in this case, which was in this respect peculiar, the family council, held after the pronouncement of the Tribunal at Grenoble had consisted only of friends of Jean Mourin.

"May I ask their names?"

M. Brondin put on his glasses and picked up a document with an official stamp on it.

"Here they are in order:

" 'In the presence of M. David Lardière, Mayor of the Commune, and of M. Desnoyers, notary, the following being present, the Abbé Dufour, M. M. Lescot, Philipponeau, Marge, Segard, Baborier, Bourbon . . .' "

"You tell me that the securities are at the Discount Bank?"

"Yes. I ought to remind you that, as the law stands, the accounts of the administration cannot be cleared

for ten days. But if you are in need of money in the meantime I can advance you whatever is necessary out of the money in hand from the paid off mortgages, about which I told you at our first interview."

"I am much obliged to you. Can you let me have six thousand francs now?"

"Certainly," said the lawyer.

He went to the safe at the end of the room and while he was opening the lock, he added:

"While you were away, I have had the rooms in your house cleaned and put in order. I would have had this done before your first visit, but I had expected you some days later. I suppose you are still in the same mind about the property? Because if your views have changed I have an offer . . ."

Jean said nothing. He put the money in his pocket and departed. M. Deschavannes shook hands with him with a sympathetic air and M. Brondin went with him to the gate.

. . . . . .

He could see from the road the wall of the villa and above it the leafless branches and slate roofs. It was about ten o'clock. On the market place a steam roller was emitting puffs of black smoke. A horseman went by at a trot. He noticed the servants standing on the window-sills and polishing the window panes. The butcher's horn sounded in the cold air. Jean

walked with slow steps in the direction of "The Willows."

He had a feeling of some apprehension. The lawyer's final words seemed to indicate that he had had the villa put into its usual condition. Jean was afraid that deprived of their enshrouding dust the house and its contents would seem nearer to him and alive once more. They would awaken his sorrows again and with them that mirage of the past which carried him back into a time that had gone forever.

He opened the gate and crossed the garden with a quicker step. As he stood on the threshold the house looked as though its wounds had been dressed. Jean pushed the door open (the knocker was clean and bright). The moment he entered the hall he saw that his presentiment was realised. In the clear cold light of the morning he could see how everything had been put in its place once more. In the larger room in which Jeanne and he had mostly lived, it seemed as though some vivifying air had entered—furniture, curtains, chairs, books looked as they had always done. Everything seemed alive once more. The tick of the clock was like the beat of a heart. No more dust. Order and cleanliness reflected in the mirrors and the polished floors.

Jean had feared the shock of the past: he felt it so acutely that the tears came into his eyes.

The place was full of urgent memories of Jeanne, the beloved companion who had gone. The warm touch of her hand seemed to lie on everything. Her delicate shadow would surely pass the windows. The creaking of the floor betrayed her footsteps and her well remembered voice would break the clear silence.

Jean opened a cupboard. Sad discoveries. A hat, a wrap of black lace, a feathered boa. Each one a recollection of his loss. They were certainly alive, these witnesses of a broken happiness. He felt them too terribly near as he stood and wiped the tears from his eyes. The walls themselves distilled the subtle poison of his evil dreams.

No, he would not give way to the bitter embraces of the past. He must live. He would be faithful, with all the force of his being, to the memory of Jeanne. But he must not live with these lying relics which would always torment him with the dream of an impossible return. The beloved image of his wife lived within him, clear and ineffaceable. His own sorrow and affection could evoke the melancholy charm of her presence: he needed no lifeless witnesses such as these to help him.

In the dark corners of his being Jean was conscious of a fear which he dared not admit. He was afraid of passing the gloomy evenings of winter alone in this house, so long abandoned, and haunted by the presence

of his wife. His mind was still weakened and full of fears. Do the dead know the reasons for our absences and, when they seem too like forgetfulness, do they forgive us?

Jean imagined to himself night time at "The Willows," the house beseiged by the surging darkness, the north wind howling in the chimneys, the rusty creaking of the weather-vanes. Recollection and regret would be too frequent visitors. Far better the sullen isolation of evenings in Paris where those pursued by great sorrows may at least lose themselves in the mazes of the city.

His mind was made up: he would sell "The Willows," he would stay in Paris and escape the fatal influences of a place so loaded with the miasma of recollection. Perhaps he had some presentiment of the horrors which his strange destiny was preparing for him.

Before leaving the villa he carefully put aside in one room, which had been used to store odd belongings, everything he wanted to keep. Then, after a long look at the scene of his broken youth which he would never see again, he went off at once to M. Brondin.

"The Willows" was put up for sale the next day, and was bought, with the furniture, by a M. Chancramy, a Swiss broker, for one hundred and five thousand francs, and paid for by two cheques drawn on the Bank of Holland.

When Jean got back to Paris he bought some mourning clothes. He blamed himself for not having thought of it before. Full of the miracle of his cure he had found as yet no place in himself for the more truly human sentiments. It was through the medium of sorrow that reality came back to him once more. What was he at the present time? A husband dressed in black, plunged in grief, and more alone in the crowd than a lost child.

His life was meagre and awkward: he hated to think he was carrying about Paris the secret of his "cure." Sometimes Jean doubted whether he had really become Jean Mourin again, free, and confronted with the task of reconstructing his existence. From time to time he acted as though he were outside himself, a stranger. Was he alive? Was he a guest at the spectacle of his own life? Present and past impressions crowded one upon another and the idea that he had seen something before was constantly with him.

Fortunately his affairs kept him occupied. In spite of the energy of M. Brondin, matters proceeded but slowly. He had to pay several visits to Meilles. His constant fear that some indiscretion might reveal that which at all costs he wished to keep hidden suggested many difficulties in connection with the re-establishment of his civil status. Here also M. Brondin's help proved invaluable. At last on January 20th, a month after

his return from Grenoble, he resumed possession of his property and his fortune. After the sale of "The Willows," and the payment of the expenses of his treatment at the hospital, he had a little more than three hundred thousand francs, of which one hundred and thirteen thousand were in cash and the remainder in inscribed bonds, which, as a result of the cancellation of his restraining order, he had to get transferred without delay.

As soon as the deed of sale in respect of "The Willows" had been drawn up and signed he went back to the Pheasant Hotel. A certain superstition not unmixed with gratitude attracted him to the hotel and restaurant which he had come upon by chance. He booked his room for a month and paid for it in advance.

II

One evening, Jean Mourin, who had, as usual, dined alone, sat late in the restaurant. Outside was a windy, soaking evening, the sort of weather that envelops one like a garment of wet India-rubber. The diners were in no hurry to leave, nor the waiters to take off their aprons. The conversation began to take an almost familiar turn. Jean, who never read at table nor talked to his neighbours, sat dreaming, with his hand against his head. The rain stopped, and Jean went out: it cost him an effort to leave the warm and intimate atmosphere for the streets where the passers-by were being hurried along by the sudden gusts of wind.

Once outside he hesitated. Should he go back to the Pheasant Hotel, to his room with its heavy curtains and melancholy candelabra, whose sombre neatness re-awakened his sorrows.

For Jean was suffering deeply. He was one of those for whom to think was to suffer. Most bitterly he loved his dead wife, and if he snatched a little rest it seemed to him like a betrayal. He saw before him the image of Jeanne, melancholy and proud and her look accused him of ingratitude and forgetfulness.

Forgetfulness, no. He was not trying to escape from the memory of his dead wife. He was piously faithful to her and it pained him to grow accustomed to his grief. For time had already begun its work of gloomy consolation: the image of Jeanne was already growing fainter. Her portrait, the oval pastel which he had kept, was a poor rendering of her beauty whose sorrowful and dreamy expression softened a little the too firm, almost masculine, features. Her clear forehead and her shining hair, the sombre brilliance of her eyes, of those there was but a feeble reflection under the glass of the pastel.

But solitude had, for Jean, even more formidable effects than this. He felt a menace hanging over him. He knew his fears were absurd, yet he could not get rid of them. He felt surrounded by something, some impalpable essence from beyond the grave. He only felt safe in the noise and conversation of the streets.

By the clock of the Exchange it was half past twelve. Where should he go? His room, the room of a bachelor traveller, ceased for the first time tonight to offer him a refuge against the phantasms of solitude. The rain had stopped. He walked down the Rue Richelieu to the boulevards where, in spite of the showers, there were still some people.

It was Saturday. Couples came and went along the gleaming ebony of the pavements. The wind had

fallen, the air grew soft, full of the light movement and premonitions of the spring.

In the dark corners, near the Gymnase theatre, women stood, loosening their cloaks and seemed to bend towards him like flowers in the night. Jean Mourin retraced his steps. Everything seemed to drive him back to his room in the hotel, where no one was waiting for him, to the cafés where under the shifting clouds of smoke sat hundreds of people who looked at him and would always look at him, with vacant eyes. He went back with an empty heart.

In the vestibule of the hotel was a traveller dozing between two suit-cases. The night porter sat reading a novel in his glass compartment. Jean took his key and went noiselessly upstairs.

He thought he had never felt so full of despair. Thick heavy shadows fell from the ceiling, shrouding in mystery the canopy of the bed and the dim furniture. A wood fire was dying down on the hearth, and he could hear the ticking of a marble clock which was drowned from time to time by the rumble of the last motor-buses. Jean Mourin went to bed.

Then it was that for the first time he called up an image that he thought had disappeared: his double, the man that he had been, *Gervais the tailor.*

Jean, who was not asleep, saw once more his other self as he had appeared in the hospital, on the night of

December the 13th, in the mirror in his room. How well Jean remembered the shock and terror of that sight.

But this odd creature Gervais, the other Mourin, had not been destroyed on the night of December 13th; he had become part of Jean's own being. Nothing dies. Gervais could not entirely disappear. And Jean saw clearly, so clearly that it hurt him, his dual personality. He had lived, he had died, and now he lived again. But from the moment he began to move, the dead man who lived once more felt that he was being followed by a tenacious ghost, a pale reflection of his soul from which he could never escape.

He heard two o'clock strike. Almost immediately he felt overcome by sleep. In the morning the noise of the servants woke him up. He rang the bell, ate his breakfast quickly, and dressed to go out. The morning was clear, bright, and dry. Jean felt more cheerful and laughed at his fears of the night.

His own affairs occupied the day time. He lived for a week in an alternation of days that were almost happy and nights that were haunted by the figments of his weakened brain. This period of his life was strange and uncertain. Sometimes he sought company, at other times he avoided it. But everywhere he maintained the silence of the solitary traveller.

. . . . . .

Perhaps it was the first effects of his solitude which, working on a mind inclined to melancholy and foreboding, encouraged the aberrations of his imagination. Or perhaps the dismal aspect of the room produced a kind of temporary delirium. At any rate, in the days that followed, a singular uncertainty began to disturb his meditations.

Up till then, Jean had thought of his second self with a kind of uneasiness. This other Mourin (which had been substituted by his terrible disease for that collection of thoughts, recollections, habits, knowledge and affections that formed his personality), Jean could not think about him without a certain mortification. But it never occurred to him to think about the other as a being foreign to himself. Mourin-Gervais and Jean Mourin were one. They were no more separate than a man who is asleep and dreaming is detached from his conscious and waking self.

But Jean began to give way to certain dim ideas which threatened to obscure his judgment.

"Gervais," he thought, "no longer exists, at least, he does not exist in me, Jean Mourin. But this personage had his own existence. Dr. Hugues' remarks, when he first really explained my case to me, surely made quite clear the particular existence of Gervais the tailor.

"He smoked, he read the papers, he had learnt to sew. And, on the other hand, his knowledge of music had

been destroyed. Moreover his speech was ordinary, almost common, while his character was docile, modest and equable.

"Therefore," pursued Mourin, "this is clearly another entity. Perhaps a double. But that very word contains the idea of a distinction."

Yet these enigmas were in contradiction to the ideas that Jean Mourin held, in common with most men, regarding physical reality and appearance. Even his imagination rejected them. It was possible, certainly, to believe in astral bodies and spirits outside the material world. But every distinction that can be maintained between knowledge and hallucination must make impossible the existence of a living entity that can duplicate itself in space, or the existence of two beings possessing contradictory qualities and amalgamating under the form of one individual.

These were the singular speculations induced by the solitude of Mourin's lodging at the Pheasant Hotel. He began to forget the original cause of his trouble. An unimportant incident which occurred a few days afterward recalled it to him and restored for a while the balance of his mind.

. . . . . .

One afternoon he was walking slowly up the Rue Soufflot. Along the gleaming asphalt of the pavement a priest was coming towards him. An ecclesiastic with

the face of a scholar, in a cassock without bands, in the Roman fashion, and wearing a cloak of thick cloth with the lining edged with red ribbon. Jean Mourin stopped, his heart beating quickly: it was the Abbé Dufour, Vicar of St. Louis-des-Français, much older indeed, but the friend of his uncle, someone who would share with him some memories of his real and veritable existence. He approached him quickly. It was not the Abbé Dufour. Jean tried to excuse himself. But his explanations were so odd and incoherent that the old priest went off rather alarmed thinking he had been talking to a lunatic.

This encounter left within Jean not only the sense of grievous disappointment; it made clear to him the necessity of keeping his secret. This was indeed almost as burdensome as living without friends and without a past. We need witnesses even of our most intimate anguish. Jean began to understand by a sort of analogy what the obsession of a remorse must be like. As yet he felt no hatred for all these creatures, men and women, who passed carelessly on, engrossed in their business, their lives and their calculations, without realising that, at the corner of the street, on the stairs of the underground, they were passing close to someone who was severed from the human tree like a rotten fruit, condemned to live and die without any natural contact with the world which he heard around him.

Jean felt no hatred but a dark envy began to grow within him.

Often, after his walks abroad, his existence in his melancholy room gave him a kind of pleasure. It even frightened him for he realised he was beginning to be afraid of everything: he no longer dared to analyse himself or to reflect. How could anyone understand the double effect of the passage of time on his duplicated life, since with all his exhausting efforts he could not distinguish Jean Mourin from the patient in Room 67.

As to the monstrous happenings of the war of which people round him were continually talking, and which he was incapable of realising, he reminded himself that his double had followed them day by day, since according to Dr. Hugues' report, the other Jean Mourin read the newspaper and joined in the conversation in the hospital.

Thus he plunged into the strangest contradictions and as the days went on he began to think that himself and the *Other* were two successive aspects of the same individual, two persons in one human being.

After a great deal of hesitation he suddenly decided to take up the study of his case. Libraries had been written by specialists on the variation of personality. Jean began to frequent with assiduity philosophical and medical book-shops. He kept, with a sort of uneasy

shame, at the bottom of a trunk which was always locked, books by Ribot, Bourru, Hesnard, Edward Angel, Betchterew, Sloeving, Decourtis, Esquivol. He lived in a sort of nightmare while he was reading these authors. At last he began to feel his reason giving way, and he locked them up, together with certain novels in which troubles like his were used as the foundation for surprising and shocking adventures.

But all the characters in the novels and the cases described by the learned authors came back to his memory. He began to imagine their presence in his room in the hotel. In the evening he seemed to be surrounded by plaintive grotesque creatures, searching for their own selves under the furniture and behind the curtains. He began to think that sooner or later this melancholy troupe of idiot phantoms would seize on him and drag him to Room 67 where Dr. Hugues was waiting for him, standing up in his white overall.

He swore he would never again open the box of books. For two days, three days, he kept his word. But the struggle was too great, he went back to his studies. The desire for knowledge drew him on as a man is drawn to the edge of an abyss.

For whole nights and days he buried himself in those mysteries of neuro-psychiatry which come so perilously near to us in our daily lives. He discovered how his ego can become enfeebled under the influence of a

morbid condition, and how its contact with the exterior world may be broken. In the light of all this information he was better able to understand the copy of the long statement which Dr. Hugues had handed to him on the day following his cure. With intentness and horror he studied the character of his second self, the man of Room 67, "Gervais the tailor," and he tried to discover any characteristics in himself that might connect him with the other. It was in this way that the image of which he had tried to get rid began to implant itself in his mind and even to haunt his waking hours. Gervais gradually became his inseparable companion.

This was the origin of the crisis which attacked him in the early part of February. It began on Friday evening, January 30th.

. . . . . .

Jean had just got into bed. A lamp was burning on the table beside him. For a long time he lay awake with his eyes closed. A brilliant pink light penetrated his eyelids. He recognised the sensation: he had felt it recently. But where? He remembered: it was at Grenoble on the evening when the soul of the *Other* had disappeared into infinity.

The *Other,* always that *Other.* Jean wondered if he was really dead. Gervais would surely return mysteriously one evening and claim and reoccupy the place of which he had been dispossessed, annihilating once more

the personality of Jean Mourin. It would probably be an evening like this, cold and sinister, peopled with the phantasms of solitude. . . . Horrible doubts! Everything seemed to exaggerate the fears of a soul lost among his kind, and especially the silence of the winter night which in the midst of Paris isolated him from his fellows.

Jean put the lamp out. Immediately he felt a presence in the room. He could not bear it. The *Other* was there, in the darkness, watching the sleeper like an enemy. And at the same time he felt himself, *his present self,* outside his own entity, and in an access of delirium, he imagined his two personalities, at the foot of the bed on which he was lying, locked in a dark and silent struggle for the possession of his body. Covered with sweat, and shaking from head to foot, he lit the lamp. He was alone in the room. The light faded away in the oval reflection of a mirror and all he could hear were the gusts of wind howling down the Rue Notre-Dame des Victoires. Jean trembled and felt himself growing pale. He could not move: an absurd fear kept him from getting up and going into his dressing room, for he would have to pass in front of his mirror: and he was afraid he would be caught and shut up for ever with his own reflection behind the silvered glass.

His fears increased as his mind grew more dis-

ordered. His thoughts seemed to be moving in a dream, outside his experiences, like a man walking in his sleep: then he seemed to fall heavily and re-enter himself, and his consciousness was enclosed once more in his own person. And afterwards the *Other* came back as if he had the power of going through the walls of the hotel, and it was in vain that Jean tried to eject him.

All night he lay there shivering, sleepless, on the verge of madness. And the nights that followed did not bring him back the calm that he longed for. It was in vain that he burned the doctor's report and sold his books. At last he began to think that the silence of his lodging enveloped the walls in a sort of isolating medium, enclosing him in the most utter and silent solitude, cutting him off from his neighbours. The very idea suggested a remedy. The bustle of some noisier habitation would dispel these fears, these terrible illusions. Undoubtedly the best thing he could do would be to live in some cosmopolitan hotel and distract his mind with the din of the orchestras, the coming and going of the visitors, and the incessant movement of the lifts. But he could not think of it for want of money. The alternative was to take some furnished rooms where the noise and wholesome vulgarity of the life around him would force him out of his imaginings. He went to look at some on the following day. But

the appearance of the landlords and the coarse looking rooms repelled him. Yet he did not give up his idea of leaving the sombre and silent Pheasant Hotel.

Chance came to his assistance. A regular customer of the restaurant, employed in the postal service, had applied for and obtained a post in Sénégal. He was looking for someone who would take over his lease and give him a good price for his furniture. It was a bachelor's apartment: three rooms on the fifth floor of a house in the Rue St. Sauveur. Two of the rooms contained all that was necessary for a man living by himself: the third was a little drawing room with a sofa in it and just space enough for a piano. The three windows of the little room opened on to two streets. A grey carpet covered the floors and on all sides was a good deal of reassuring noise.

The owner wanted six thousand francs for the lease and the furniture: Jean paid him the same day. The rental was twelve hundred francs. Jean had his trunks and clothes taken round to the Rue St. Sauveur and what was left of his music from the villa at Meilles, together with a miniature grand piano that was the wonder of the neighbourhood. He believed he had saved himself.

. . . . . .

Having paid his bill at the hotel, and made sure that his belongings were on their way to his new lodging,

Jean took his departure by the Rue de Réaumur and, full of satisfaction at walking abroad on this warm March afternoon, he turned down the Rue du Sentier.

The passers-by followed each other along the narrow pavement. Near the corner of the boulevard Jean stopped to look at a jeweller's shop window. On one side was a display of large silver objects, laid out on crimson velvet, and endlessly re-duplicated in an arrangement of mirrors. Jean was amusing himself by watching how the reflections were continually effaced by the traffic and the passers-by, when a kind of sudden fascination kept him standing stiffly against the shop window. He wanted to move: he realised that he ought to move. But a sensation of awful emptiness held him rooted to the ground and he looked in front of him.

In the open street, in the midst of all the movement of a Paris morning, there came upon him the same shudder that had seized him away in Grenoble, in room No. 67, when he had observed in his toilet mirror that mask of the *Other,* the stranger, Gervais the tailor, that aspect of himself, that bearded personage so well known to the doctors and the nurses but of whose existence he himself had been ignorant for sixteen years.

He had seen him every day, morning and evening, at his dressing and undressing: how was it he had never

noticed him? And now for the second time he felt the same disquiet.

This face belonging to another, to the *Other,* with its beard of greying hair and linen cap, the impersonal countenance of a working man in hospital, there it was still on his shoulders. He felt painfully uneasy. He meant indeed to remain unknown in a world unknown to him: but at least he wished to be himself and a single individual.

But the face that he had caught sight of among the kaleidoscopic reflections of the street recalled Mourin to the reality of his double life. He was in possession of his senses, cured, a reasonable being, yet he carried with him the appearance of a mysterious madman whose words, actions, and interests had been unknown outside the room of a hospital in Grenoble: he, the living man, was the husband of a dead woman whose ashes had been years ago so cruelly scattered, and whom, to the hour of her death, the man that he, Jean Mourin, had been for sixteen years, had never known.

He understood suddenly that his life was like a film cut off and joined at random. An episode that he believed destroyed might suddenly emerge from nowhere, upset the order of events, and introduce for the second time the gestures and expression of a personage who had disappeared. Fearful mysteries indeed. Jean thought he had found an immediate remedy for these

uncertainties: he would destroy once and for all the appearance of the false Jean Mourin, the face of Gervais which by a disquieting anomaly had survived its owner and covered like a mask the face of the musician who was now restored to health. Just as Jean had left his intermediate self in the room of the hospital at Grenoble he ought to have destroyed, on his return to the society of the living, the very appearance of the man that he no longer was. He would discover his real face again, get rid of his beard, and alter the cut of his hair: why had it not occurred to him before?

He found himself by the Chateaudun crossing. There was a barber's shop at the bottom of the Rue des Martyrs. Jean pushed open the door quickly as if someone were pursuing him. There was no one in the shop but an assistant idly turning over some illustrated papers. While he was unfolding the towels he looked at the customer who was in such a hurry to alter his appearance. But Jean did not notice him: he had no eyes but for his own grey-bearded visage which he was going to destroy, and which neither he nor anyone else would ever see again. And he reflected with a certain sombre pleasure that what remained of the occupant of room No. 67 would now be removed from the world and that Jean Mourin, unrecognisable and completely reconstructed, would make an attempt at a new life. The personage who was to make the ac-

quaintance of the good people in the Rue St. Sauveur would be the Mourin of old days, recovering from life such measure of his youth as had been left to him.

Meanwhile the hairdresser was busily stropping the razors and washing the scissors. The firm round mask of the new Jean Mourin gradually detached itself from the soap that covered it. With the aid of the brush his hair recovered its romantic waves. Jean felt that he was escaping, that with his everyday face he was recovering his name, his inner life, the baulked youth of a man who has grown old without living: the loving faithful heart of a man of twenty-eight, though he was a widower of forty-five abandoned by everyone, whose only companions were the forgotten dead.

. . . . . .

He was delighted with the house in the Rue St. Sauveur. In other days it would have filled him with disgust. In the lodge which opened on to the vestibule the porter with a cap on and sleeves rolled up was playing cards with one of the tenants. Jean reached his apartment by a staircase which, from floor to floor, passed through four distinct layers of smells. At the top of the stairway draughts from three windows blew down the corridor. A passage led to the right through three rows of numbered doors. A little further on an iron sink absorbed and ejected the contents of slop-pails. Jean, who began to become acquainted with his

neighbours, called them to mind as he passed their doors.

Near the beginning of the passage lived two taxi-drivers. Opposite them lived an Italian, a traveller in soap, wearied by his visits to the wash-houses of La Villette and Ménilmontant. Further on was a certain Gade, a retired clock-maker, a hunchback, with a spine curved like a fish-bone. In No. 38 lived a sort of broken-down military man, always to be found in shirt-sleeves and elastic sided boots, one Brielle de Chuinaz, a retired officer of dragoons, whose interests were mainly erotic. His habits and his conflicts with the police were well known. On Sundays from time to time at the beginning of the month he came back to the hotel after a stormy night so broken and ravaged, that his jaw had dropped like the hinged front of a box-file. The adjoining room belonged to a working man who, when inflamed by alcohol, created a violent disturbance in the corridor in the middle of the night. Next to him was old Mother Petiot, a kindly good old lady who mended umbrellas and lived with her mother, a paralytic endowed with immortality. Last but one, next to Jean Mourin's little apartment lived the potman of a bar in the Rue de Mont Orgueil, an invisible Savoyard, who came home late at night and every morning on awaking poured out blasts on his accordion.

. . . . . .

In the little drawing room Jean found a wood fire nearly out which he re-lit: he took off his overcoat and sat down on the sofa. What a relief! To add to his enjoyment, he went over step by step his movements since his awakening at the hospital. And his pleasure was increased by his having no part in the cares and struggles which surrounded his island like a storm. With a cold bourgeois egotism he took refuge in the past: his solitude seemed to prolong its duration and he was able to enjoy it alone like a forbidden drug.

Sometimes in the course of his wanderings he came upon old fashion papers, old theatrical and sporting magazines, where he discovered the appearance of a society of which he was the sole surviving contemporary: groups of elegant ladies photographed at the races or the skating-rink in wide skirts and ribboned hats seemed to him to recall the friends of her, whose loss he was so recently mourning. He could only breathe comfortably in a world that had disappeared. One day as he was crossing the Passage Brady, he was touched to notice an antiquated vestige of a smart lady of years ago who was gazing with dim eyes at a milliner's window display.

Everything that was connected with the past brought his youth back to him and all his will was absorbed in the effort to live again.

In this way he came back to music. Before leaving

"The Willows" he had put aside, together with certain family portraits, Jeanne's dresses, and the contents of a desk, his piano and his music, the works of the Masters and his own compositions. For a long time he hesitated. He did not dare to open the piano. He could not disassociate music from the recollection of his dead wife. All his admirations had been hers also. To play once more would perhaps only bring back echoes of the joys that they had shared. An attempt to re-awaken these ardours and delights would be too like those gloomy and sacrilegious pilgrimages that are made alone to the scenes of ancient affections. Surely it would disturb her shade, she who had never heard his steps approach her grave, and was there not a risk that the spell of his music would evoke another phantom? All manner of fears tormented him and he was torn between the horror of the silence and solitude, to which Gervais would certainly one day return, and the magic of music which would call up the living image of his wife among the moving waves of sound.

One day—it was a Sunday afternoon—he ventured to open the piano. His love of music overcame his apprehensions. He began to play. It was like a feast to a starving man. He played greedily with the blissful energy of all his being. There was no more thought of sorrow or of exile in that poor room which was filled with the rhythms composed by the Masters long ago.

He played from memory, and the flood of music seemed to flow from his brain along his outstretched arms and fall in rapid drops upon the keys.

The music was like a strong and simple consolation; it enveloped his whole being. He bent forward over his hands on the keyboard and the sad festival of harmonies continued. The instrument obeyed his will and created, in that little room, dreams and forgetfulness. The light began to fail but he did not notice it. The dusk began to cover everything with the faint hue of a spider's web: only the soft whiteness of his hands could be seen moving over the ivory keyboard which a last ray of light reflected in the dead blackness of the piano.

Jean got up unsteadily. The hooting of the taxi-cabs could be heard from below. The street began to light up, while the upper stories gradually melted away into the violet dusk. Jean stood by the window and watched the masses of the buildings disappear into the surging mist: the eddies of smoke and the electric sky signs flashing their alternate red and white lights.

Should he go out, and scatter these delicious terrors? No, he had some bachelor supplies in a cupboard: from those and the remains of his breakfast he made his dinner. Then he carried the lamp into the drawing-room and with a kind of savage obstinacy sat down to the piano again. How long did he go on? No matter. That evening he absorbed music like opium. He

thought he had found a cure for his obsessions: a festival of dreams that he could enjoy at will, above the hostile noises of the city upon which the rains of February still beat down.

The time that followed was like an awakening. Midnight had just struck and the familiar noises of the fifth floor began. The cinemas had closed and the lodgers were coming home. All over the house were heard bursts of laughter and of talking and then a sharp clatter of footsteps down the corridors. From behind his glass door Jean watched all the neighbours of his story as they passed.

M. Brielle de Chuinaz came home singing, one of the earliest: after him the taxi-cab driver. The retired clock-maker brought home the elderly spinster: they talked for a long time between their two doors and finally made up their minds to retire to their respective attics of which the portals slammed simultaneously behind them.

Jean listened carefully to all these noises. They marked the time as exactly as a public clock. As soon as these folks had got into bed the fifth story fell into its first sleep. It was awakened for a moment by the arrival of the Savoyard potman, and again later on, about the time the markets opened, by the return of a certain ancient cabman whose life and times were disappearing in the neighbourhood of stations and certain dubious haunts.

Jean spied on all these comings and goings and found a relief in it. He knew that when the noises had subsided the bitter burden of silence would descend on him with all its force. The nightly noises of the street—the endless succession of lorries and market gardeners' carts—could not dispel the fear that he felt that night of seeing the dark and silent witnesses of his former madness appear in his room.

In a few days, perhaps, he would overcome once and for all these evil presences that were the offspring of his mind and battened on his solitude like blind and monstrous fishes in the unlighted depths. He had found light and a companion. What a relief never to be alone again, to triumph for ever over fear and silence.

The *Other* had no more terrors for him. In his intoxication Jean thought that his deliverance was merely an affair of the will, and he saw himself strong and resolute, crushing his horrible visitor of the night boldly and suddenly, as if he had rushed at him and strangled him.

A door opened. A fantastic and lugubrious song filled the corridor, accompanied by a kind of drumming noise. It was the drunken occupant of No. 59 arousing the neighbourhood. This happened from time to time about the middle of the night, more especially when the rain was beating on the sloping lid of his garret. Jean got up from his chair and went out. The man was

wandering about in the darkness dressed in a shirt and pants. He was marking time to his songs with the key of his room, with which he was beating on the cover of a slop-pail.

Some other doors opened and half dressed people emerged. The drunken man went on singing and paid no attention to their protests. Suddenly a light appeared at the bottom of the stair-case, as the outer door of the house shut. A heavy step creaked up the stairway. The old coachman of the Urbaine Cab Company was coming back to his garret. His white hat appeared, looking like a dirty paper bag, and then, behind a cloud of blue smoke from his pipe, a muffler surmounted by a strawberry coloured countenance.

"Come along, old boy, time to go to bed," he said, as he noticed his friend, who without a protest allowed himself to be pushed into his room.

"Good-night, everybody," grunted the cabman with hoarse good nature. The clatter of his sabots could be heard as he moved among his belongings and on the bare floor of his habitation. Soon the voices grew silent. The far-off whistle of a locomotive was borne over the roofs on the gusts of rain. Jean stirred the fire and went to sleep by the hearth, sitting in his mahogany and velvet arm-chair.

III

The spring arrived. Jean lived in silence, outside the passage of time. His neighbours, whom he met at the common sink in the corridor and whom he greeted with the most careful politeness, had given up trying to account for him. They all called him "the gentleman" with that touch of slightly contemptuous respect which the lower classes show to the broken bourgeois. They knew that the musician did not earn his living by his talents, that he lived alone, and quietly, without mistress or friends: his habits were known and there was no information to be had from old Mother Petiot who looked after him. At last they decided that the new lodger was a man who had no need to work, a little eccentric, without vices, who had suffered misfortunes.

Several months passed in this way, while Jean, among the harassed and agitated lives of his neighbours, lived like an artist of days gone by. Food, rent, personal expenses and new music, of which he grew quickly tired, this was the sum-total of his expenditure.

He thought with sadness of the joys of past days, the simple ardent delights of the musician. Those Sundays at the Châtelet concerts! They lived again in his mind,

images grown somewhat blurred. Jean knew very well that he would never go to a concert again. He would find too many regrets and too much bitterness under the low ceiling of the gallery. What sort of audience had taken the place of those bearded and mystical bohemians bending in the darkness over the sounding cauldron of the auditorium whence surged up the genius of Beethoven or Wagner, while the romantic Ride, launched with loose reins, shook the walls of the old theatre. That was nothing but a haunt of sorrow and of the past. He made up his mind and finally shut himself in like an aged recluse. A lending library provided him with novels which he read at a sitting but without enthusiasm. He wrote a few sonatas which he destroyed almost at once. He rarely opened a newspaper, but he was an enthusiastic reader of the *Illustration.*

About the middle of April he felt a sort of physical disturbance. His seclusion began to be burdensome: he felt once more the desire of seeing the faces of old times. Perhaps the lawyer Brondin could find some traces of them in his records. He wrote to him. The lawyer came and regretted that his researches had been in vain. But his client seemed ill, uneasy, in an almost enfeebled condition, and he expressed his anxiety.

"You live too much alone. Don't you go to a café at all?"

"I never go now."

"You must amuse yourself."

Jean promised and kept his word. From that date he began to take long walks. A pale sunshine played over the posters on the walls and the young foliage on the trees. Quick showers sent the taxis hurrying along, then a fresh breeze blew down the streets and everything seemed suddenly to look cheerful.

In the open daylight Jean saw himself more clearly. He had grown thin and pale. His head seemed laden with his thoughts. He walked slowly, aimlessly, always led by a sort of instinct which brought him back to the places to which he had been most attached. Sometimes he avoided the passers-by with a sort of shrinking movement which made them turn round: some of them would stop and watch the disappearing figure whose gait, expression and pallor displayed so profound a melancholy. As he walked about in this way a singular idea came to him. "How," he asked himself, "would this Gervais that was I, have looked at all this, what impressions would he have felt at this new Paris that has become so feverish and diversified?" This notion, which at first seemed purposeless, came back to him frequently and finally became an obsession. He could only get rid of it by hurrying on, or by speaking to a passer-by under some futile pretext.

One day he thought he would consult a doctor and

only changed his mind when he was at the door and about to ring the bell. He felt, indeed, troubled and uneasy, and he began to be afraid of experiencing once more in the Rue Saint Sauveur, the nights at the Pheasant Hotel. But he had an even more lively fear of doctors, of their scrutinising looks and their questions.

If, when tired of walking, he sat down outside some café, the idea came back to him, even more powerful and compelling. He conceived himself then under the twin aspect of a duplicated individual, his two entities seated side by side, or opposite each other, and consuming identical drinks. But as the days went on the image of Gervais began to reconstruct itself in Jean's mind with more and more precision. He did not see the *Other:* he felt rather as though he himself were being inspected by him, and experienced that sort of annoyance that is produced by the too attentive regard of a stranger. This soon became intolerable: he called the waiter and went away quickly without turning his head.

This went on until the beginning of June. Jean had taken up smoking again. At first the use of tobacco, which he smoked freely, as man without occupation does, relieved him to an extraordinary degree. His hallucinations grew less frequent and finally disappeared. Jean recovered his peace of mind, until he

began to be troubled by faintness and had to give up his pipes. Once more he shut himself up. He watched the traffic gloomily from his window as it crossed in two streams like the movement of shuttles, and wove along the base of the buildings a living stuff coloured with purple shadows and yellow sunlight.

. . . . . .

In the following week Jean began to go out again. His normal expression had come back and he seemed quite sane once more. But it was merely seeming. He was inspired by a morbid instinct which made him simulate normality. Moreover it was noteworthy that the opinion of his neighbours worried him.

At the same time his obsession that he had seen things and persons before increased upon him: he was continually looking into people's faces searching for and finding resemblances. Where had he seen this M. Brielle de Chuinaz, and the Savoyard with his plaintive accordion, the hunch-backed clock-maker, and the red-faced cab-driver, living side by side in lodgings like this, in the ancient top story that with its rows of numbered doors seemed to move over Paris like the deck of a ship.

Also the crisis that Jean Mourin had just gone through left certain abnormal obsessions behind it, notably the necessity of keeping the door of his lodging bolted.

It was a glass fronted door with an overhanging lintel and cross-bars such as can still be seen in the top floors of certain buildings in Paris. A coarse curtain, sewn in tucks, and stretched on two rods, concealed the entrance from the view of the passer-by in the passage. As soon as he got up Jean was constantly pulling this curtain over the corners of the glass panes. He never lit the lamps without hanging some thick stuff over the door. And he so arranged the furniture that the door of the drawing-room was no longer behind him while he was playing the piano—as he did for hours together.

He was continually listening to the sound of steps which could be heard tapping down the passage outside the partition wall: and he listened eagerly as though he were waiting for or dreading the arrival of someone.

. . . . . .

Summer came quickly and promised to be hot. Jean, who got up early, spent the morning wandering about the squares and gardens. He lay down in the middle of the day and at dusk got up again to play the piano. Then he went off for a walk always alone down the quays of the Seine. He avoided company more and more, realising that in everything he was a stranger to his fellow-creatures. Did he not differ from all his fellows who were accustomed to consider life as a continuous phenomenon, while for him, Jean Mourin,

any conception of the universe must include the idea of intermittence.

Existence seemed to him like a series of three rooms, of which the second, the middle one, was dark and moreover geometrically impossible since it had no outlets and no walls. He had passed through these rooms alternately feeling his way and dazzled with light. Thus his intelligence gradually accepted the idea of resurrection. He had sojourned for a time in a tomb and he was now approaching the confines of a second death so that in his mind the relations of succession appeared at once destroyed and inverted.

These fearful fancies haunted his mind and music completed its ruin. He used music with despair as a sick man who knows that he is lost uses a poisonous remedy. Sometimes he spent the whole day at the piano, no longer turning the pages of the volume he had picked up and opened at random. He played from memory and gradually deserting the text plunged into passionate improvisation. His hands moved heavily as they struck chords full of a savage majesty. Thus he went on at the mercy of his delirium, absorbed in his talent, but paying no more attention to the empty sounds he was creating than a man pursued would notice the charms of the landscape.

Night invaded the little room and it became enveloped in shadow. Jean continued to evoke his mirages.

The echo of the notes seemed suspended in the night like an aroma. The arpeggios unrolled themselves like invisible creeping growths. The hazard of inspiration and the recollection of his hands reconstructed in the darkness once familiar melodies and forgotten rhythms. A confusion of sound broke up gradually into intimate harmonies. The player found a momentary salvation and dedicated to Jeanne, to the recollection of their dead youth, the dark intoxication of his senses.

The power of music freed him from the laws of time as it broke the spell of his affliction. The Rue St. Sauveur, the hostile city, the muddy evenings when the enigmatical Gervais was concealed among the anxious crowds returning from their work-shops or their offices —all this had disappeared.

In his thoughts he went back to "The Willows"—to the time of shaded gardens, love and youth. The wild concert took on an enchantment. The shadow of his beloved moved again about him. The subdued light of the lamps, under their lace shades, lit up the depths of the mirrors and the portraits of their forebears. Or again it was the time of his betrothal at the house of Uncle Claude in a country priest's garden scented with jasmine and melon-flower.

Again he would feel suddenly surrounded by flames. He was forging his harmonies in the awakened fires of his passion. He wept, he called upon her name even

as he hammered on the keys. His head thrown back and his face wet with tears he gave way to his intoxication until weariness overcame him. And weariness came before satiety. Jean collapsed at last on to his bed and slept the heavy sleep of a man exhausted by excess.

He awoke in the morning fully dressed, his face lined and creased like a silk handkerchief. He acquired a new strength from his walks abroad. He could be seen coming back with hurried steps and taking his breakfast at some pastrycook's along the street. There was something edged and sensitive about his appearance at this time which was quite appalling. His body, wasted with fever, seemed continually in need of support. His whole being quivered. The breaking point was near. They talked about him in the evening in the seven lodgings on his floor, so full of misery and despair, and they all thought that his condition was the fantastic caprice of an idle bachelor, extremely irritating to his neighbours.

. . . . . .

About the middle of June the city lay prostrated by the heat. A wind from the south blew through the streets, fetid, burning, and loaded with invisible dust. The neighbours disappeared from view. At intervals the clock-maker could be heard cursing. The retired soldier appeared in the passage half naked and waving

a fan. In the heaviest heats the house seemed abandoned.

Very early on the morning of the 13th, Jean Mourin rushed out of his lodging. He carried a valise in his hand and greeted his neighbours as he hurried towards the stairs. He looked like a man who had awakened too late and was afraid of missing his train.

Without slackening his pace, he ran down the stairway. At the corner of the Rue Montorgueil he hailed a cab.

"To the Lyons Station."

He recovered his breath as he sank back on the cushions and took out his watch. He thought he would get there in time to catch the express for Grenoble. His whole being was possessed and intent upon this hope. If he caught this train he would arrive on the morning of the 14th, at the platform of a small station buried among chestnut trees under a blue cliff seamed by torrents: Bourg d'Oisans. There lay Jeanne Mourin and the 14th June was—for him—the first anniversary of her death.

The train was just moving out of the station. Jean managed to clamber into a carriage. As far as Dijon he looked through the window at the passing fields and roads. And when his eyes grew tired of the chequered landscape whirling past he fell to watching the antics

of the smoke that seemed rushing at full speed to meet the train. It mounted up into the sunshine, projecting on the fields fantastic shadows which gradually disappeared among the shivering grasses as the flakes of smoke faded into the blue heaven.

Opposite, an obese gentleman was wiping his brow. In the other corner a priest was dreaming over his breviary. Both of them had tried to engage Jean in their banal conversation. Finally, giving up their taciturn fellow traveller, they had taken to conversing with each other and for hours without ceasing they had been lamenting together the evils of the time. Jean had to change at Lyon. Night had fallen when he reached Grenoble. A night without sleep. In the early morning he took the Vizille tramway and from thence a winding path which brought him about midday to the bottom of the road, at the entrance to the Bourg. A moment later Jean went in to the little mountain cemetery which was more full of white graves than a Mussulman necropolis. For some time he searched among the tombs. Jeanne's grave was at the far end near the wall between two family vaults. An iron railing confined the wild growth that slipped between the bars like strands of hair. Two crowns of immortelles and blackened ornaments hung with their torn ribbons on each side of the melancholy enclosure. But there were, too,

flowers whose scattered blossoms lay among the dark grasses like the remains of a shattered garland. In the middle of all this disorder was a stone cross:

Here lies
Jeanne Mourin
died June 14th 1906
aged 26 years

The inscription was becoming effaced: a patch of moss had blurred the beloved name, and the date had become almost a matter of conjecture, so weathered had the stone become with the rains of sixteen years.

When he reached the grave Jean felt all the pain of weary hearts at the sight of the resting place of their beloved. For the first time tears burst from his eyes. He leaned against the railing and his tears fell upon the little deserted mound. Jeanne was there. In this place her mortal remains were dissolving, and yet he who was bending over the earth in which this frightful process was being accomplished felt more acutely there than anywhere else the presence of his departed wife. He managed to restrain himself from calling her name aloud in the sunny silence of the cemetery.

"Jeanne, it is I, it is your husband who has come to look for you."

His legs trembled and gave way, and he fell upon his knees. Then with a sudden effort he got up and

walked quickly towards the town. He is looking for a gardener. Someone points to a door. Flowers, flowers! He buys an armful, holding them against his body, unbound and without leaves. Flowers alone, flowers.

He runs to the cemetery, and pushes back the gate. The sun which had gone in for a moment has appeared again. Jean moves quickly among the graves and flings his perfumed burden with open arms into the melancholy enclosure. Then he takes off his hat and with expressionless face and dry eyes departs without looking behind him.

. . . . . .

He spent the morning idly in Grenoble. He felt stronger and more at ease and took a physical pleasure in breathing the keen air of the Alps. He realised suddenly that this pilgrimage, whose urgency had come upon him in the unquiet moments of an awakening, might be the means of rescuing him from the fatal slavery of his dreams.

He walked in the shade of the Victor Hugo Square like a man relieved of a long anxiety, who goes upon a journey and comes again upon familiar scenes not without a certain satisfaction. He turned to the left along a few short streets through which were passing officers and soldiers. Just as he was entering the Avenue Lesdiguières, he felt that somone was walking be-

hind him and at the same moment heard a voice addressing him in a strong local accent:

"Why it's Monsieur Mourin! Good morning, Monsieur Mourin!"

He turned round as if someone had struck him. Was there someone in the world, a living being who knew his name! Someone was calling him by name, putting a name to that face of his that had arisen from the dead—a human voice was breaking the bonds of his solitude. His first movement was one of fear. The gesture that escaped him must have been like that of a guilty soul who after years of hidden life hears his name suddenly called out by a policeman. But a foolish hope filled Jean's heart.

"Sir?"

He saw before him a man of fifty of reddish countenance with a moustache and of a common appearance. He was wearing a suit of drill and carrying a stick with an awkward air. Jean's attitude did not appear to surprise him. Raising his hat he came nearer and observed affably in a jovial voice:

"Ah, I recognised you although you have had your beard shaved. Of course I knew you first just as you are now, only a little less gray and a little fatter. Lord, that wasn't yesterday. . . .

"Sir, I have not the honour . . ."

"You don't recognise me, of course. I understand.

But it gives one a funny feeling after being together for so long. You were an extra special case, you were. They can't deprive you of that."

And he added politely as if he were paying a choice compliment:

"I've seen some cases of madness, the finest of them: but I've never seen one like yours."

Already a few idlers had stopped at the edge of the pavement.

"Sir," said Jean, much annoyed, "I beg you not to speak so loud. First will you tell me who you are."

"Certainly," said the other in a lower voice but with the same playful air, "chance is a wonderful thing. I'm Auguste Francoz who looked after you in hospital. I saw you admitted: so you can imagine I know you pretty well! But this is the best of it. Only yesterday we were talking about you in Dr. Hugues' wards, just as he was passing your room. No. 67, wasn't it? He turned to Sister Céline and me who were going round with him as usual, 'And Mourin,' he said, 'don't we get any news of him? Odd, I should have thought he would have written.' Then as he was going downstairs Dr. Hugues said, 'It's annoying not to keep up with one's patients. Besides I have got something to give him.' "

"To give me?" said Jean.

"Yes."

"And what did he say about it?"

"Nothing. You know he doesn't say very much. . . . Well, Monsieur Mourin, I won't give you any advice, but as you are here, if I were you I should look in at the hospital."

A sudden light flashed in Jean's eyes. At the word hospital he felt a sharp shock. Then he appeared to reflect and make up his mind.

"Well anyhow I'm glad to have seen you," said the man . . .

"Thank you, Auguste, I will go and see the doctor."

"I forgot to ask you whether you were living in these parts. No? I'm sorry. And go and see Sister Céline. She was there too when you came. She will be as pleased as I am."

"Good-bye, I will go and see them."

"Good-bye," said the man, moving off.

. . . . . .

"This is a surprise. Sit down," said Dr. Hugues.

Jean recognised him at once. Tall, solid, moving easily in his loose coat tied in at the waist with a linen belt. And in his military eyes the same direct look that seemed to come from far off and fasten like two arrows on the face of his visitor.

"I was talking about you a little while ago."

"I know, doctor."

He did not seem to hear the answer. Mechanically,

with the powerful detachment of the scientific mind, he took possession of his patient. Jean made no protest, and allowed his head to be bent backwards. Dr. Hugues placed his hands like blinkers over Jean's temples and looked carefully into his eyes.

"Everything going all right?"

"Yes, doctor."

"No headaches, no giddiness, no nightmares? You ought to keep in touch with us, Mourin. Don't you trust us?" He took hold of his wrist and went on talking while feeling his pulse.

"Do you sleep well? I think you have got thinner."

"Doctor," said Jean Mourin, "I met someone just now."

He related his interview with Francoz. But he had the impression as he spoke that his voice was becoming thin and weak and far off. He felt as though he were going to sleep and the sounds that reached him seemed dim like those that are heard in the brief moment that precedes sleep. Dr. Hugues watched him steadily with that cold pale look that was so apt at discovering passing symptoms and penetrating the secrets of his patients.

"Come," said the doctor, without moving his eyes, "I see that you have entirely forgotten Gervais."

Jean tried to answer. Should he confess his fears and recount his dreams, relate to this man who might

be able to rescue him, the hallucinations of the Pheasant Hotel. Perhaps Dr. Hugues would be able to show him some remedy. Should he speak? No. Suddenly, something held him back. They might keep him here, shut him up once more. What was this force that controlled his actions so that he no longer recognised the agency of his will? He felt now as if he had been betrayed into entering this white room, into the presence of this stern man of science, between these walls that were smoother than porcelain. The real fear of a child shut up in fun who believes he will never get out again. The friendly reproaches of the doctor seemed to reach him through a partition. It seemed as though night were falling and that the gate was about to be shut when the refectory bell rang. Then he would never be able to get away.

"No," he replied, "I don't see him any more."

The doctor looked at him with even greater intensity. Under his regard Jean felt himself diminished, giving way.

"You no longer see whom?" asked the pitiless voice.

"Why, Gervais."

He heard a burst of laughter which seemed to come from far off. But the cheerful countenance of the doctor seemed to threaten him. Everything was moving: the white walls with their framed diagrams, the

lacquered chest on which stood a chemist's jar painted with pink carnations, the book-case with its dull glass windows and melancholy volumes of formulae, the table covered with brass mechanisms and microscopes, the glass case of nickelled instruments, the light with its uncovered reflectors. . . . Jean, caught in this seizure, did not dare to move or to breathe. But the doctor ceased to look at him and suddenly everything in the room seemed in its place again. Sounds became once more clear, and it seemed as if the doctor was talking very loud and saying . . .

"Well, good-bye, good-bye. I am very glad to have seen you to-day."

At last Jean was able to answer.

"I won't keep you any longer, doctor. Anyhow, I must think about catching my train . . . Yes, for Paris, Rue St. Sauveur, a little bachelor lodging. But what was it you wanted to tell me?"

"To tell you?" said Doctor Hugues. "Ah, yes, of course I had something to give you. Nothing special." (He opened a drawer.) "Here you are: two photographs that were taken of you last year, in front of the laundry. It is exactly as you were with your beard, at least, . . . Gervais, you understand?"

"Yes," said Mourin.

He held out a hand that trembled slightly and took the photographs.

"Ah, here he is," said Sister Céline gaily, as she came in.

She wanted to embrace Jean, and she looked with a certain maternal pride at this man with the greying temples whom she had so long looked after.

The affection with which everyone in the place seemed to regard him Jean felt only indirectly. These manifestations were surely addressed to the other, the false Mourin, to Gervais the tailor who was the only one these people had known, and whose portraits he now held in his shaking hand.

"You are not looking at your photographs," said Dr. Hugues.

"Yes, I am."

Jean saw himself as he had been on that evening of rain when his cure had taken place. The snapshot showed him standing with his legs apart in front of a door with heavy locks, bareheaded with woollen socks on his feet, dressed plainly in a regulation shirt and a pair of coarse trousers tightened at the waist. Near him a hospital orderly sat on a garden chair meditatively smoking a pipe.

The doctor took down the telephone receiver: he gave orders in a calm firm voice. The Sister went off on tiptoe. And Jean, far away from his surroundings, was looking eagerly at the photographs.

Even in the shirt he was wearing and in the full

light of the hospital yard, he recognised the man who was pursuing him, the haunting appearance which had taken the place of his own. Yet who had stood for this photograph? Undoubtedly himself. And in the face of this piece of evidence he felt more than ever the fearful reality of his double personality.

A voice cut short the thread of his recollections.

"You are staying long?"

"I am leaving to-night."

Voices came up through the open window from the garden. Jean thought he recognised them and shivered. Then the thin melancholy drone of a harmonium could be heard, followed by oaths and bursts of laughter.

Jean pulled himself together.

"Good-bye," he said.

"Well, well," said Dr. Hugues, "good-bye. Have you taken to music again?"

"It is my only occupation."

"Don't overdo it. By the way, leave your address. Bon voyage, then, and this time let us hear from you. Good-bye."

. . . . . .

On the following day about twelve o'clock Jean was walking down the slope in front of the Gare de Lyon. With his small suit case in his hand he made his way quickly towards the entrance to the Underground. The

weather was grey and heavy and exhausted without warming him. He felt chilled to the bone.

Having fled from the hospital like a man who still doubted his freedom, he had sat in the night express counting the hours till daylight, and he only recovered complete confidence when the train was running through the stations and the gardens of the southern suburbs. He would soon reach Paris, where he could proceed to lose himself, and defy the implacable vigilance of this Dr. Hugues, whose power against him was unlimited.

Give him his address indeed! He congratulated himself on having evaded the question. And now—

They were getting near Paris. Darker and more populous suburbs revealed on either side of the line the approach of the city. Jean felt as if he were coming back into harbour. He forgot his fears, the menace of that crouching, furtive, watchful shadow that he thought so often he had recognised against the walls behind the endless procession of the passers-by. At the moment he could only see in Paris that power of absorption, the quality of a social melting-pot in which he who wishes to disappear soon becomes nothing but smoke and recollection. The high walls of a labyrinth, all the mighty quarters of the city rising up to the clouds, the earth rumbling in its countless subterranean galleries, hordes of adventurers, Yankees, half-

castes, cocaine-fiends, and busy scoundrels, all the caravanserai of Babel moving in the lights of Montmartre, the ruffian hangers-on of dancers and prize-fighters, a debased orgy, thefts in open daylight, all this detail, which Jean in his excitement composed into a tumultuous panorama, promised him a fresh confidence in his destiny. Henceforward he would be free.

But when he reached the Rue St. Sauveur, disillusionment began. The concierges, who hated the mysterious tenant (M. Mourin had not received one letter or one visitor during his six months' residence), had just summoned the police. Pretending to believe that the tenant had decamped, or had met with an accident, they requested that the door of his apartment might be forced by a locksmith. The unexpected return of Jean put an end to their plans. But the police authorities were anxious to clear up an investigation for which they had detailed two constables and made enquiries in the neighbourhood. Jean was overcome with terror. He had never thought of the secret of his life being discovered, of his "case" being served up in the newspapers as food for vulgar curiosity. He hurried round to the police court.

There he found, in an enclosure of which the wooden barriers had been worn smooth by the elbows of the public and the police, an official with a paternal aspect and a surly voice, who raised his head and asked:

"What is it?"

Jean gave his name.

"Ah, yes," said the official, "your papers?"

"Here is my identity book."

Taking out a handful of memoranda out of a pigeonhole, the other began to write, dictating aloud to himself.

"Mourin, Jean-Albert, born at Fontenay-le-Comte (Vendée) March 5th, 1879, son of Pierre-August and Marie Bérard, independent, husband of the late Jeanne Blanche, née Thévenet, born August 12th, 1881, at Saintes, daughter of Louis and Anaïs Violet . . ." Then, turning to Jean he observed:

"It appears that you live a great deal alone and in rather an unusual manner. That is your own affair. Only when you go away it would be better to let the concierge know."

"But why? I receive no letters."

"I know. Anyhow, that is your own concern. I am giving you some good advice. Take it or not as you like." Jean took back his identity book which the other handed to him still open. *Widower:* He noticed the word: it had been entered in 1906 a few months after his admission to the hospital. Thus his life, his legal life, had gone on while he himself was worse than dead: deprived of his soul. He thought over all this while walking slowly back to the Rue St.

Sauveur, and suddenly he remembered that he still had in his waistcoat pocket the two photographs of Gervais.

His doubts fell upon him once more. The movement of the streets surrounded him like a hot whirlwind. Passers-by in a hurry jostled him. He went on, his only sensation being a feeling of emptiness and unreality. He reached the Rue St. Sauveur: he felt that he was being observed. The shopkeepers, who are resting at that hour in the afternoon, seemed to be awaiting his return. They were talking about him. Jean, in a confused sort of way, realised that he was intruding in a world in which idleness is not distinguished from vagabondage. He felt himself that he was out of place. He went past the porter's lodge timidly and climbed furtively up to the fifth floor.

All seemed asleep. Jean slipped into his apartment. Everything was in its usual place. A ray of sunlight fell upon a portrait on the wall, a pastel done of him long ago by Uncle Claude, who had been a clever draughtsman. The piano was open. Everything seemed at rest with that egotistically intimate air that distinguishes bachelor dwellings. Jean felt almost happy, and sitting down in his arm chair found no difficulty in dispelling his load of troubles. Why could not he always be like this? Would not oblivion come with the quiet resolve to live like a man among men?

And he who had thus been restored to life thought for a long while about the little cemetery in Dauphiné where for one sunny hour he had felt the exquisite shock of a really human sorrow.

. . . . . .

This it was, this sudden flash of recollection that finally destroyed his control. He realised it the following day when he tried to settle down to music again. Over the surge of his passionate hallucinations hung the image of the railings and the flowers of that grave.

The ideal sepulchre of Jeanne which he had constructed with his fingers, in the madness of his solitary ecstasies, would never rise again under the dark cedars of the forest of dreams peopled with happy shades. O beloved wife! She would never again lend her wandering form to that magnificent interment, the myriad folds of that shroud and the delicate grave clothes of those encircling harmonies. She lay beneath the earth now, nothing more than a frozen skeleton, at the foot of the cruel mountains that had killed her, under the muddy tears of the snow and rain.

Jean knew it. It was an aspect of reality that defeated his most cherished means of consolation. Should he close his piano as if it were a coffin from which music would never again arise?

And how was he to live? Everything failed him. He realised now that before his journey to Grenoble

and his meeting with the hospital orderly the thought of Dr. Hugues was like a far off lighthouse through the fog. But what was his experience when they had met? A bitter deception, a sharper doubt, fears renewed. He had even lost the refuge of his melancholy isolation and he felt hostile forces bearing down upon his existence from every side.

PART III

I

An aimless walk and, as it would seem, chance alone had led Jean Mourin to this street in which was the entrance to a large music-hall: a square of vivid light, a display of posters and under the electric globes, dark groups of people standing about during the interval.

Jean came up. He did not in the least want to finish the evening at a show. But he stopped in mere idleness, read the programme, and was just moving off when it began to rain. He found shelter in the vestibule. From all sides people came in running. The rain went on: taxis moved off slowly through the puddles in which glimmered the reflection of the street lamps. Many of those who had taken refuge near Jean decided to go in to the promenade. Jean followed them. It was the evening of September 20th.

After a moment he was glad he had decided to go in. What he saw amazed him. The usual women and people smoking elbowed him in the corridor. He could hear around him every sort of language. No one listened to the singers: from time to time when the din of the orchestra suddenly ceased the audience

watched the perilous antics of the acrobats. Then the promenade began to move once more. Passions, perfumes and lights matched their forces once again. All this took Jean's mind off his thoughts and he felt a little bewildered and almost happy.

In one of the intervals he followed some of the audience out into a kind of semi-circular foyer, hung with photographs of singers and gymnasts famous long ago, whose style, like their moustaches and their costumes, seemed to everyone but Jean extraordinarily out of date.

A bell rang. The corridor gradually emptied. A few of the people from the promenade still lingered. Jean feeling a little tired walked around the foyer once again. He wondered whether he should wait till the end of the programme. The noise of the bell ceased and an attendant came and turned down the lights. Still Jean did not go back into the theatre. Later on he wondered why he had strayed in this deserted passage, he who had always been nervous of solitude. But are not the most significant events in life always brought about by some involuntary action? For the space of one second a man steps outside himself and obeying some secret impulse which later on he will mistake for chance, acts in the face of his own desires. A second is enough; in that second an entire existence is overthrown.

Jean Mourin stopped idly in front of a mirror. Tarnished and badly lighted, it shed a pale glimmer round the fringes of its red curtains. It was one of those ancient mirrors in places of public entertainment which seem to have lost their powers of refraction. Their surface is like that of dead water and the light grows dim and fades away into leaden reflections. In one corner of the foyer there remained a haze of tobacco smoke which obscured the outlines of the shabby purple upholstery of the furniture and gave a look of unreality to the collection of theatre notices, frames, and flowers, as if they were seen through a veil of gauze.

Jean, wandering alone in solitude, absent-mindedly hitherto, stopped for a moment and looked at a programme nailed to the wall and listened to the murmur of the orchestra from far off. At that moment without knowing why he turned his gaze to the mirror. And he nearly fell backwards.

Beside him, a little behind, in the blueish mist reflected in the mirror a figure stood motionless. In a flash Jean recognised him.

It was Gervais.

Jean who hoped he was mistaken managed to gather strength to look again. Might it not be a distortion of his own face produced by some effect of cross reflection? No: there are two faces: one pale and hag-

gard, that of Jean Mourin, the other masculine and healthy, belonging to Gervais—the face that Jean had seen on the evening of December 13th, in the looking glass of the hospital at Grenoble, the face of the photographs—the face of Gervais the tailor. He had to come back: and he had come.

He was looking quietly at his reflection, with a wooden pipe in his mouth, his hands deep in his trouser pockets. He was dressed like a working man on a Sunday, with a certain nonchalant air, a quizzical careless look that suggested the secretary of a Trades Union. The face was unmistakeable: there it was, in every feature, the face of the inmate of Grenoble hospital, encircled by the coarse and greying beard, rings round the eyes, yellow complexion and that indifferent mouth which seemed so ill assorted to the rest of his countenance. No, Jean could not and did not question it.

And yet he could not take his eyes off that face, which in the badly lit mirror seemed to lurk like a second figure in the background of a portrait.

But such things aren't possible! Gervais had no longer any real existence, Jean knew that perfectly well. If Gervais was to return Mourin would have to fall back into the abyss of madness. But Mourin is here, in a Paris theatre, he knew himself to be in possession of his reason, wholly alive, and in control

of his actions. Come, he will turn round, with a sudden movement, and he will laugh to find that he has been at the mercy of an hallucination. He will look behind him. He is quite certain he will see nobody. He turns round.

The man is there, really there, a man of his own height—the man whom he would recognise among a thousand as having seen three times in three different mirrors and whom now he could touch with his hand.

They exchanged looks. Gervais stays where he is looking good-naturedly at his nervous neighbour and calmly removes his pipe from his mouth to release a puff of smoke. And then he smiles.

In the theatre a singer was warbling a Tyrolese song. The shrill roulades reached the foyer and were lost among the noises of the streets. Jean and Gervais are alone, face to face. A little way away a cloakroom-woman sat dozing in a chair. An attendant walked quickly through, turned and disappeared into the staircase leading to the boxes. A noise of applause and then silence.

"What do you want?" said Jean trembling and stammering as he faced the other.

"Nothing at all. I am merely walking about," said he, "I came to amuse myself, and the singer, you see . . ."

He stopped. Jean was standing against the wall

and in his eyes was something so wild, such an expression of terror that the unknown added:

"I am very sorry, believe me: I took you by surprise. You can't hear yourself move on this carpet—but I didn't mean to."

Jean tried to pull himself together. His salvation depended on what was going to happen now. He realised this and summoned all his powers of will. In vain. He had not the strength to enter on an explanation which he knew to be necessary. He only wanted one thing now: never again to see this terrible personage.

"Go away," he shouted, "go away!"

"Go away?"

Jean was beside himself.

"Yes, go away at once."

The man was not easy to move. He shrugged his shoulders without answering. The scene seemed to him incomprehensible and, no doubt, a little ridiculous. Why should he be told to go away? He would like to understand. Honest people try and explain themselves, don't they? He moved slightly in Jean's direction. He did not look in the least quarrelsome or evilly disposed. But Jean shivered with terror at his approach.

"Don't touch me, I tell you, I forbid you to touch me."

"But what's the meaning of all this?" said the other by this time thoroughly annoyed. "What is all this? After all I'm quite ready to admit I'm in the wrong. I took you by surprise, I know. I should have coughed as I came up to you from behind. But you needn't make such a fuss as all this. There now—he's going to faint. Come, come, Sir!"

The attendant woke up, shook her apron, put her bonnet straight and ran to ask for help.

A policeman and the doctor attached to the theatre were summoned. The check-takers ran up from the auditorium. No one understood a word of the explanation of the man with the pipe. The policeman took a note book out of his pocket. Jean was lifted on to the armchair and remained speechless, paler than if he had been drowned. Everyone stood round him talking: the doctor loosened his necktie.

In the meantime the only witness of the incident gave his account of the affair to the policeman who looked at him silently and with suspicion, his note book open in his hand. But what astonished the doctor was that at every word uttered by the gentleman with the pipe, Jean trembled as if he had been galvanised by an electric shock.

Fright, a nervous collapse, thought the doctor, as he began to dip a towel in water.

But Jean got up. His trembling stopped and he be-

gan to listen. In order to hear better he staggered towards the little circle that stood round the policeman and the witness. The latter was talking in louder tones, and Jean whose expression showed his passionate attention, looked at him fixedly. He paid no attention to what the man was saying: what he was listening for and what he heard was what no man assuredly had ever heard before: his own voice coming from outside himself, the sound and intonation of his speech, obeying a will other than his own and reaching his ears with the awful precision of an echo, but an echo without an original.

"Anyhow," said the policeman, turning towards him, "you have no charge to bring. This gentleman did not strike you?"

Jean shook his head.

"Still I must make a report, and you must give me the usual particulars. You, Sir, you say you are a tailor. Workman or employer?"

"Workman, at present out of employment; times are bad just now."

"Your name?"

"Gervais."

Jean started up. He collected his strength and leapt at the man with his fingers bent like talons. They all rushed forward: the man made as if to defend himself. But Jean moved but one step: his arms felt

vacantly for support, his mouth gasped for air, and he collapsed and fell unconscious.

. . . . . .

When he opened his eyes, Jean saw a number of faces round the bed on which he was lying fully dressed. He recognised his neighbours. A confused murmur filled the room: he could hear other voices in the sitting room. Jean breathed deeply. A doctor was bending over him: not the previous one, but an old gentleman who lived in the house and wore a beard like tangled grass descending over an impoverished student's necktie. His colleague of the theatre had handed over the patient, after his address had been ascertained.

This prolonged fainting fit—which had lasted for more than an hour—alarmed the doctor. He had done everything he could to rouse Jean from what he took to be an attack of syncope, and he was wondering whether he had not better try caffeine. But Jean's sigh relieved him from his perplexity. He quickly removed his glasses from the end of his nose and said, in a cheerful voice:

"Good! Now we're feeling better."

The doctor's firm tones put an end to the conversations that were going on. The neighbours who were standing round came in closer. They all watched for an expression on the musician's face that should satisfy the curiosity of his fellow lodgers. Jean turned

his head slowly on the pillow and looked at them absently.

"He does not want to talk," said a voice.

"Now then," said the doctor, "we must not tire him. But he can't be left alone. Will anyone undertake to spend the night here?"

The neighbours consulted each other forthwith and, having provided their excuses one by one, they began to move off home. M. Brielle de Chuinaz, the retired dragoon, went out first, with his military step: after him went the clock-maker, the cab-drivers, and the traveller in soap.

It was old Mother Petiot, the umbrella mender, who offered to stay.

"I've got my mother to look after," she said, "but I can go backwards and forwards . . . Shall I make some *tisane?*"

"No, let him rest. You must try and sleep, M. Mourin. I will come back and see you tomorrow."

Without opening his eyes Jean expressed his understanding by a movement of the head.

The doctor went to take his hat off the stand and was just going out when a voice was heard from the next room.

"And what about me? Who is going to pay my fare?"

"I will," answered another voice.

And with these words Gervais appeared in the doorway.

Jean sat up as if some powerful grip had seized him by the shoulder and pushed him forward.

The doctor put his hat down again, turned to Gervais and asked:

"Are you a friend of M. Mourin?"

"No, I don't know him. But I am in a way responsible for the accident . . . So I thought I ought to come back with him and pay the cab."

"Very proper," said the doctor. "Your feelings do you credit."

Jean was sitting up, his face convulsed.

"Take him away," he cried, "I won't see him. He follows me about. In my own house! O God, in my own house!"

The people who were on the point of going stopped abruptly, and a silence followed. Gervais standing in the doorway, looking alternately at the sick man and the doctor who said:

"But you have just told us that you did not know M. Mourin. What does this mean?"

"How do I know?" said Gervais, shrugging his shoulders.

In a composed manner he related what had happened just as he had done to the policeman in the entrance to the music-hall. He did not leave out a single detail,

with the useless exactitude of people who pay more attention to facts than causes. His good faith and kindliness were perfectly clear.

"I can't think what he had got against me," he said by way of conclusion.

"Don't listen to him," said Jean Mourin. "It is he, the *Other one*. I thought he was dead when I left Room 67. He follows me about. Dr. Hugues lied! All the books lied. I beg you all, deliver me from this man, inform the police. O God, what will become of me?"

He flung himself to the end of the room, behind Mother Petiot and stood trembling in childish horror.

"Nervous fever," said the doctor.

"As you see," added Gervais.

But Mother Petiot who was used to illness managed to lead Jean towards the bed.

"Go away, all of you. He will go to bed quietly."

Gervais crossed the room and went out without turning round. The doctor added as he went through the door:

"If he gets too excited, send for me."

"I will put on some cooling compresses," said the good woman, "and make him some lime-water tea."

. . . . . .

Mother Petiot spent a whole week with Jean Mourin. From time to time she got up, put his bed-clothes

straight, and with a gentle gesture that meant, "You must behave yourself," she went off on tiptoe to her own room. She looked like Sister Céline, and Jean, without thinking much about it, noticed the resemblance at once.

He felt comfortable. The companionship of the old woman reassured him. A heavy dreamless sleep overcame him every evening as soon as darkness fell, and the only illumination in the room came from the alternating lights of an electric sky sign.

In the morning Mother Petiot was at his side mending, or preparing some brew. This went on for a week and then Jean began to get up.

When the doctor paid his last visit Jean expressed his regret for an incident which he no longer seemed to understand at all and the good doctor took himself off ingenuously pleased with his diagnosis.

His old neighbour asked no questions. She had seen other and worse cases. She had known Mother Pommier in the Rue des Amandiers, whose husband had gone mad from alcohol and died of the fear of wildcats. She thought solitude and too much music had deranged the mind of the poor gentleman, so amiable and so polite.

"You ought to marry and sell that thing" she said, pointing to the piano.

Jean smiled, and as she persisted—

"I won't play so much." he answered.

"You haven't been the same since you went away last month, you can take it from me. I don't usually pay any attention to my neighbours: but here we all live on top of each other, don't we?"

"Yes," said Jean Mourin dully, "I dare say that journey was the cause of everything—and the photographs . . ." He stopped. Mother Petiot raised her eyes and looked at him over her spectacles. Then she shook her head and went on sewing, muttering . . .

"What photographs? Some more ideas of yours?"

"Did I talk in my sleep, I mean at first?"

"You certainly did."

"And what—what did I say?"

"O how should I remember? Just nonsense. Keep calm, Monsieur Mourin. You talked about Dr. Hugues, who frightened you very much, about a cemetery, and also about these photographs. Come now, you're not sensible: you're keeping too much to yourself and doing yourself harm. You're using your brain too much."

"Yes," said Jean: and after a silence he repeated, "Yes."

They said no more. Mother Petiot shook her head and started work again. Jean walked up and down. He hesitated about going into the drawing room, but after looking at the peaceful old woman he decided

he would. Everything was arranged with almost monastic precision. The portraits glowed gently in their frames. A delicate light was streaming through the soft net curtains. It was the beginning of October.

He heard Mother Petiot's voice from the next room.

"I'll make you a fire tomorrow."

"Thank you," Jean answered.

The next day he was awakened by the crackling of the logs. He felt happy and grown younger. He noticed under a table the old magazines of 1906, which he had not looked at for weeks. He picked them up and read and re-read them with the idle patience of illness.

Then he took up a novel which was lying by the fireplace. He opened it and something fell out: the photographs. Jean bent down quickly, picked them up and put them away secretly.

Mother Petiot, sitting sleeping in a chair, was darning his socks. From time to time she looked at her patient without raising her head or ceasing the movement of her needle. Two days later she put her spectacles in her pocket, collected her sewing and the various objects she had brought with her. She considered her neighbour entirely recovered and informed him that she did not intend to return. She would accept nothing for her services.

Jean found himself alone once more. His first care

was to get the photographs which he had hidden away in the drawer with the precaution of a miser. He acted like an automaton: his gestures, his very intentions, gave him the sensation of something made up in advance, decided by a will external to himself. He expected to be deeply shaken as he took up the photographs. He was surprised by his calmness and by the doubts that began to rise in his mind. He began really to believe what he had said to the doctor and he wondered whether the incident of the looking glass had been anything but a figment of his dreams. Had Gervais really come into the room? Had he uttered words in which Jean could hear nothing but the sound of his own voice? Or had Jean been merely the victim of some vision in his sleep? Was he an abnormal case?

Who knows?

Have not all men their Gervais, impassive and obstinate, who follows them step by step, slips into their bed beside them, and watches them ceaselessly, ready to ravish their soul from them, live on their body, and share horribly in their death? Perhaps these doubles, who are always present, are only visible to some of us who are thus cruelly privileged. But he who listens to the beating of his heart, and watches his thoughts moving over the great abyss of the world, knows that at his most intimate confessions a witness

is present, a witness with penetrating eyes who probes him and judges him and promises again and again the complicity of silence. Who has not felt in his joys and celebrations the obscure presence of this silent messenger? Who has not sometimes suddenly cut short his laughter without knowing why, because within his breast he felt the blow of a melancholy warning? Who can say that he walks alone, moves alone towards his end, and can stretch out his arms without touching the mysterious unknown—Gervais?

. . . . . .

On the following day which was the 10th October, Jean decided to resume his old habits. He went about Paris again. He wore out of doors a cloak and hat which he thought made him unrecognisable. He was full of feverish explanations to anybody who expressed surprise at his appearance. In a few days he had entered on the usual round of his existence, which was divided between meals, music and walks. He came in and went out with furtive steps after observing the stairway with extreme care. Having done this he passed his hand over his forehead and made a dash for it, keeping very close to the wall.

These actions betrayed a certain consistency of mind. In his own lodging he thought he had nothing to fear from Gervais, the avoidance of whom was his continual aim, this presence who stood like a calm contemptuous

sentinel on the threshold of those mysteries in which his imagination was lost. But out of doors he thought there was every risk of running against him. Yet in spite of this Jean could not resist the temptation of that danger which drew him like the edge of an abyss.

Jean, after many mental peregrinations, came back again and again to the same point. He felt the presence of his "double," and yet he was doubtful of his existence.

Gervais was like those creatures of the films who, transparent at first, assume bodily form and move over the scene and then fade away again into no more than a shadow with a human form, shed by the light on the moving surface of the screen.

Jean thought about this in the street. If he had expressed aloud his views on the successive materialisation and impalpability of Gervais, the people round him, who were going rationally about their affairs, would have taken him off to the hospital of the district. And yet every evening these same people, so proud of their good sense, accepted similar possibilities, rendered under their own eyes by the artifice of the cinema. The fact was that they could not distinguish external reality from their own experience.

. . . . . .

While Jean Mourin was thus contending with shadows, a sort of conspiracy was being formed against

him in the Rue St. Sauveur. The porter and his wife were in it. The neighbours of this "gentleman of means" had taken their part when the police, before disposing of the affair of his journey to Grenoble, came to reprimand them for their excess of zeal and the undue promptitude of the action they had taken. Still these grievances would have been forgotten if, after the incident of September 21st, Jean, on recovery, had not persisted in his contemptuous attitude towards the people of the house.

Who was he, after all, this personage without employment, so proud and so reserved? Did anyone know of his means of subsistence? Where did he come from? And who was that workman individual who had come on one evening only and had been the cause of the scandal which the house still talked about. Except Mother Petiot, so patient and so like Sister Céline, all his neighbours on that floor showed the musician that aversion which sooner or later condemns a fellow lodger who is too discreet. If after ten o'clock he touched the notes of his piano there would be shouts and banging of fists on the partitions. Coarse jokes were chalked up on the panels of his door. When he crossed the passage he would hear on his way allusions to the mystery of his existence. They roused the drunkard of No. 40 against him. The only letter that he ever received was an anonymous one. Thus only

looks of hatred reached the abyss of his appalling solitude. Had he come back among his kind after so many years merely to suffer, and like the man summoned from his tomb by the voice of Jesus, was he to invoke death with his lamentations and beg that this miracle might have an end?

These were cruel days. Harassed and hunted down, Jean resumed his wanderings through Paris as the only remedy for his depression.

Thinking to avoid an encounter, the very thought of which froze the blood in his veins, he only went out in the day time. At the first sign of fading light he hurried back to the Rue St. Sauveur. And he was to find this terror of the night was not unjustified, though it may have been but the figment of his imagination.

One evening, when he was later than usual, as he was walking rapidly towards the Carrousel, he noticed under the gates of the Louvre a shadow waiting, which he thought he recognised at once. He tried to alter his course and go down the quays. But the force which always defeated his designs drew him under the dark passage. He walked through very fast but he could not help looking at the motionless figure.

It was *He*.

He seemed to be waiting for someone and was looking far off towards the Pont Royal. Jean kept on

his way. He did not dare to look back until he reached the arcades of the Théatre Français.

Gervais had not followed him. Nevertheless Jean jumped into a moving auto-bus from which he got down shortly to lose himself in the crowds on the boulevards. When he got home he was almost glad to hear again the hostile hammerings on his partition walls that had now become almost continuous. He shut himself in and pushed the heaviest piece of furniture against the door.

. . . . . .

Gervais! Paris was surely large and populous enough for one man to avoid meeting another. Where could he hide himself? Was there nowhere in this vast city, in its thousand stony furrows, a refuge for those pursued by the phantoms of fear? Or would she reveal her millions of inhabitants like those in the Valley of Jehoshaphat whom nothing shall conceal when the heavy marble jaws of the tombs begin to gape and the dead are vomited forth and the earth re-peopled with those who have come to life?

Terror changed his appearance to such an extent that his neighbours were struck with it and forgot their bitterness against him. M. Brielle de Chuinaz, the retired officer, tried to make a polite demonstration in the name of them all. Jean opened his door an inch or two and shut it again, without a word, in

the face of the emissary, who withdrew holding his greasy hat ceremoniously against his chest.

Jean had no more need of his fellow men. He plunged into a savage isolation, no longer opened his windows, and left the dust on his furniture and his papers. He spent his nights and days on the watch, lifting up the curtain over his door, and as soon as the noise of a step shook the partitions, he withdrew hurriedly into his lodging.

His gait grew hesitating and like that of a blind man. People in the street stopped and looked at him, thinking he was walking in his sleep. When he went to the restaurant he followed a complicated course, retracing his steps and confusing his tracks: and, full of his obsession, he ate without raising his eyes from the table-cloth.

One day he ventured to look up. It was only for a second: Gervais was sitting opposite him, at the adjoining table, watching him.

Jean shrieked aloud. He hardly noticed the other people getting up in confusion on all sides. A mist of blood covered his vision: but his terror overcame his anger and he rushed out bareheaded. He wandered about all day, turning back on his tracks again and again and only stopped when, worn out with fatigue, he sat down on a bench in the Rue des Gobelins. He breathed once more. His anguish had been so great

that an icy perspiration still covered his neck and his cheeks. His knees were trembling. Some of the passers-by stopped in pity at his appearance but the cold soon hurried them on again. Jean, drawn and haggard, did not feel the biting wind.

He stared into the distance, rivetted to his seat by weariness and the horror of his fear. In the confused coming and going of the street, in the gloomy light, he watched for the man who, he was sure, had followed him. Twice he thought he recognised the indolent gait of Gervais. Then, suddenly, he appeared from another direction and reading a paper as he walked along.

Jean leapt to his feet and could be seen running along by the railings of the *Manufacture*. He ran for some minutes in and out of the neighbouring streets as if he were in a labyrinth, and finally found himself in front of the iron gates of the Montparnasse Cemetery. He retraced his steps, lost himself again and went into a church. As night fell, he started off once more. And henceforward the material presence of Gervais continually haunted him. He thought he saw him by the Observatory getting out of a taxi. Later on about eight o'clock he saw him outside a café, near St. Germain des Prés. He was not alone: another man was sitting at the table with him and talking with animation. Jean, leaning against a lamp-post, saw them get

up and go off arm in arm in the direction of the Concorde.

He at once started off at a great pace in the direction of the Boulevard S. Michel.

Lost and aching with hunger he prowled about the obscure streets of the Latin Quarter. He did not dare to stop or to go home. In his disordered mind he still retained a sort of middle class reluctance to appeal to the police. Near the top of the Rue Champollion by the fence of a timber yard, a girl of the streets came up to him. He nearly gave way and followed her into the entrance of a neighbouring building. But he kept on and found himself, almost worn out, and without knowing how he had got there, in the Rue de Montpensier by the entrance of the Palais Royal Theatre.

It was the time of the interval. Idle spectators, chauffeurs and hawkers stood round this wild figure whose eyes searched all the recesses of the walls as if he were looking for some invisible being. A motor-car dispersed the assemblage. Jean, who was left alone in the middle of the road, was knocked down. He picked himself up unhurt.

Without even shaking the dust off his clothes he turned to the left along the Rue des Petits-Champs and then to the right along the Rue de Richelieu. He thought he saw the object of his fears in the distance:

he turned back again and started off at a run in the direction of Rue Montmartre. Gervais seemed to be waiting for him at the entrance to a cinema. Like an animal at bay Jean backed on to a wall, ready for anything. But the apparition had disappeared: in the square of vivid light there was no one but a policeman in his cape stamping his feet. Jean moved on, looking round him desperately. He could see nothing and plunged into the Rue du Croissant.

Out of breath he finally reached his lodging. The gate on to the street was already shut. Just as he rang he heard the noise of footsteps on his left: the silhouette of Gervais was outlined at the corner of the street against the white shutters of a dyer's shop.

Jean's heart stopped. The man came up with a swinging step and easy pace.

Jean rang the bell.

The man came on. He was only a few paces away.

Jean rang again.

The man came nearer still. A quick click and the gate moved. Jean, in an agony of terror flung himself into the entrance and with all his strength of his back and shoulders, of his whole body, he shut the door again. Then he listened, his ear against the wood. The steps stopped for an instant in front of the house, then they went off without hurrying, just as they had come.

Jean shouted his name in the darkness, crossed the court yard with a rush, and drawing his clothes closely against his chest, which was soaking with perspiration, he ran upstairs without stopping till he reached the glass door of his lodging.

. . . . . .

His hand trembled. The flame of the match contended feebly against the prowling shadows of his room. Jean went backwards and forwards . . . where had he put the lamp? At last he got it.

Nothing had changed. The light touched everything with the familiar reflection. The objects round gave him back his courage; they surrounded and protected him.

Then and then only he realised from the disorder of his person the extremity of his terror. His hair gave his ravaged face the appearance of madness: grey locks matted with sweat covered his forehead. He had lost his necktie in his long flight. His boots and the bottom of his trousers were covered with the mud of the gutters.

But what did it matter? Jean was at home! The familiar noises of the fifth story reassured him. One by one the tenants returned noisily home. From one room to another, through the open doors, they exchanged with a gloomy pleasure the disappointments

of the day. The last arrivals walked more heavily. Jean sitting near the table under the luminous cone of the lamp, his eyes turned towards the door, watched for the sound of another step. As the moments passed the fear of hearing it grew less. And Jean said to himself that if the night passed without the man coming back he would be saved. What was the good of looking for him? Safety would come with the dawn. This certainty glowed like a night-light in the darkness of his struggling consciousness. He must wait for the dawn, watch the roofs growing blue and the first smoke go up in the haze of the morning . . .

Gradually the comings and goings stopped and the fifth story went to sleep. Jean alone was awake, attentive to the slightest rustle. He could only hear the faint sound of the flies round the lamp and the ticking of the alarm clock. From time to time the far off hoot of a motor horn came up from the street, or the dull sound of a door shutting. And then nothing more. The flat silence of the night.

How long did this go on? Jean never knew. He had calmed down and yielding to his fatigue he was now in that dulled state, in which the process of recuperation begins to fade into sleep, when an unmistakeable noise roused him from the chair and brought him to his feet.

The portrait, his portrait, had fallen from its nail and lay in fragments on the floor in a dust of broken glass: in falling it had brought with it the curtain over the door and Jean, petrified with horror, saw, close up to the glass the pale but calm countenance of Gervais.

What happened to him in the very second that followed he never tried to explain. A jet of blood seemed to rush from his heart through all his being. As on the evening of his first apprehension in the hotel of the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, he felt himself suddenly strong and full of decision. The terrible visitor was there, thoroughly alive. Here was his chance. Jean was at the door in one bound, drew the bolt and turned the handle with such vigour that Gervais staggered and nearly fell into the room.

The struggle was short and horrible. Not a cry. Nothing but the desperate breathing of two enemies who were trying to strangle the life out of each other. But hatred increased Jean's strength tenfold. His hands, bent like talons, reached the neck of his adversary and stopped as they found the throbbing knot of the throat and felt the folds of flesh. He stiffened, and pressed with all his force until the vertebrae cracked and the sound seemed to re-echo deep in his own breast. Gervais fell loosely on to the carpet. Jean wiped his forehead slowly with the back of his hand.

. . . . . .

The door had been open during the struggle. Before shutting it Jean looked carefully into the corridor. Not a sound. There was only a cat at the end near the staircase, whose eyes were open and looked like two little green moons.

The numbered doors of the apartments seemed like coverlets over that silence of sleep which is like no other silence. He listened and waited. A regular snoring could be heard from a neighbouring room, that of the cabman. Then Jean pulled himself together and without haste and with infinite care began his preparations.

To get to the drawing room he had to step over the corpse. He made a careful stride, noticed that he had forgotten the lamp, came back, and finally left the dead man in darkness.

He fetched the small trunk and filled it with linen. Into the pocket under the lid he slipped his jewels, money, some securities, a pencil-holder, some smoked glasses and a few photographs. There was still enough room for a pair of slippers and his travelling cap. He carefully fastened the two locks and did up the straps of the cover. Then he took off his clothes and began his toilet taking his time like a man in no hurry.

Shaved, powdered, his hair plastered down, he picked up the lamp and went into the other room in

which was the cupboard containing his clothes. He chose rather a peculiar travelling suit, from among his original wardrobe, a sort of pea jacket with a leather belt, and a pair of loose trousers. When he had dressed he went back into the drawing room, put the music straight, tore up various papers, shut the piano noiselessly, put the chairs in a row, then always with the same regular step, the lamp above his head, and carrying his valise, he went back to the other room.

Gervais' body, his face already purple, took up the entire floor. Jean looked at him and in order to see him better bent over him, holding the lamp.

The great open eyes of the strangled corpse stared at a corner of the ceiling: his lips were curved in a laugh and a spot of foam lay on his grey mouth. His necktie had slipped up over his collar and altogether he had a look of some malicious puppet, a huge marionette from another world, an appearance which was emphasised by the position of his feet, that were turned inwards and of his right hand which lay spread out over his shirt front with the pompous gesture of a singer at a wedding.

Jean found the spectacle of this ignoble corpse intolerable. He put the lamp down on the mantelpiece and taking Gervais under his arms he dragged him in the darkness to the further end of the apartment where his bed lay.

He felt neither fear nor remorse but merely annoyance at possessing only one lamp. He went to fetch it in order to hoist his victim more conveniently on to the mattress. He took a white sheet out of a cupboard and stretched it over the body. From the forehead to the point of the feet the stuff fell into that stiff curve peculiar to a shroud as it falls round the body of the dead.

Before taking away the light Jean glanced about him and seeing that everything was in order he went out slowly, walking backwards. As soon as the door was shut he went to look at the time.

It would not be long before it was light. Jean now awaited with composure the dawn that would come in time and shine upon his steady eyes.

Mechanically he put in order the scattered objects in the drawing room. While he was collecting himself he noticed between the window and the mantelpiece the portrait of Jeanne, an oval pastel, framed in tarnished gold. He took it down. A surprising lucidity dispersed the last shadows from his mind and it seemed to him that for weeks and months he had looked at the portrait with forgetfulness and indifference. He hardly recognised it. It was no longer the melancholy image of his beloved but her appearance in the happy days of their betrothal. One would have said that a touch of joy seemed to animate the colours of the

pastel. Jeanne's very expression seemed to have lost its sombre fire and her regard seemed to move over her husband's face with an expression of tenderness and weariness. Jean kissed the glass over the smooth pale forehead. Then he took out one by one the small wedges that kept the cardboard in the frame and after a last long look at it he threw it in the fire. Then he disposed of the medical reports which he found lying in a case of pigeon-holes. He was on the point of opening a desk which contained his most precious souvenirs when he was overcome by the smoke.

He went to the window and opened it. Six o'clock struck. With his elbows on the window sill he listened to the clocks answering each other in the cold still air. Soon after the last belfry sank into silence, Jean noticed a square of dark indigo surrounding the dark lines of two chimneys.

A fresh breeze blew from the invisible horizon and quickly, in the lifting iris-coloured darkness, the entire landscape of roofs, towers and balconies awoke. The whistle of a locomotive rose like a summons from depths still dark. Day had come. Jean Mourin looked a long farewell on the belongings of his humble life, picked up his bag, went out, and, having carefully closed the door, threw the key through a grating into an abandoned attic. The sound of his step faded into the distance and a moment later he was in the street.

II

WHERE should he go? Jean did not reflect: he obeyed. Since that moment when, cured of his fears, he had taken Gervais by his throat he lived a more intense and concentrated life. His actions, far from escaping from the control of his will, obeyed a preconceived order which he followed coldly with the precision of an actor familiar with his part. Had not his every movement served its purpose? Was it possible to kill more silently and leave fewer traces of his crime?

The question now was to get away. Jean was ready for anything, and drew strength from the very feeling of danger. From the moment when the body of Gervais had grown heavy and relaxed between his arms before collapsing on to the floor, Jean had felt in a sense awakened. The drops of sweat had dried upon his face and without the slightest effort he had controlled all his movements. With the same composure he had arranged a departure, his preparations for which resembled those for an escape.

And now, buttoned into his belted jacket and carrying a trunk stuffed with valuables, he was walking

with a firm step along the deserted pavements of the boulevards. At that hour he met nobody but ragmen, sellers of newspapers and a few restaurant-keepers hurrying towards the markets with napkins tied round their necks.

At the corner of the boulevard and the Rue St. Denis a small refreshment shop was open.

"Coffee?"

"Yes," said Jean, "and a railway time-table."

He looked up carefully a slow train which would take him to Sens where, one hour later, he could catch the Geneva express. He thought that in this way he would baffle the first curiosities of the police. But he subsequently reflected that this elementary ruse could only delay and betray him. He decided to leave Paris by the Troyes line and cut across the P. L. M. at Moret. He got there about four in the afternoon and liked the place. Why should he be in any hurry to leave it? He lived at the hotel for two days tasting every minute the delight of regeneration. He did not for a moment believe that the corpse of Gervais could be discovered. After the affair of his other journey and the observations of the police, the neighbours would not be in any hurry to notify his disappearance. The corpse was under lock and key and could well wait for the waggon from the Morgue. Who knows?

The autumn was nearly over. Icy showers lashed the

country. Then the sky cleared. Jean walked along the towing path by the river Loing. Gleams of pale water lay dreaming in the tracks. A few boats moved gently by the willow-planted banks. Over the low houses fluttered the last leaves swept into the wind by the smoke rising from the roofs.

Almost too deep a peace, too wholesome an air! An immense hope swelled in Jean's heart. He was living with all his strength, he walked and breathed in these clear spaces in which he saw the mirage of his future. O to live and go forth!

Should he go to Geneva? No, that would be foolish. There the police of all the world lay their snares. Before he had set foot on the quays of Cornavin he would be tracked, discovered and quietly arrested in the corridor of a hotel. He could see himself going back through the frontier station, between two gendarmes, on the yellow bench of a third class carriage . . . No! not that rat-trap!

Where should he go! A little French town with its cobbled streets, a pension de famille by the ramparts, a shining room where one goes to bed at dusk, what could be a better refuge? Of course! Too near Paris would be defying the police: too far off, he would run the risk of arousing provincial curiosity. He would do best to go to earth and wait, without useless movement, until the case had been put away. Why not here?

He walked on carefully. The sight of a man standing still who seemed to be watching him made his heart shrink: but he mastered himself and forced himself to walk slowly with a natural air. Suppose the crime was discovered! The name and description of Jean Mourin would be circulated to all the police headquarters. Suppose they were looking already for the 'clean shaven man,' dressed in black, in all the stations on the harbor quays, in suspected lodging houses, at Meilles, round the Rue St. Sauveur.

Suddenly Jean heard the sound of voices. At the end of the street which opened out into a square in front of the station, people were standing round a seller of newspapers: others were walking towards the town reading the opened sheets. Jean felt a presentiment: he quickened his steps and came up to the group.

"Give me a paper," he said.

"The *Petit Parisien?*"

"Anything you like."

In the middle of the front page there was a sketch which Jean noticed with a sudden dizzy shock as if it had struck him in the face.

It was his own portrait, the one taken at the hospital, the upper part of his body covered with a white shirt, an anxious expression on his face, and behind him a door loaded with great bolts, the photograph

which Dr. Hugues had given him—and underneath it the legend:

"Mourin, the supposed assassin . . . or the victim."

He stopped abruptly. Then his eyes wandered towards the heavily leaded heading over the picture and the text. A STRANGE CRIME IN THE RUE ST. SAUVEUR. *Discovery in a lodging of the body of an unknown man whose identity appears to be confused with that of his murderer who has disappeared.*

And Jean leaning against a tree in the square read as follows:—

"A very curious affair, which seems without precedent in the annals of justice, aroused a lively sensation last evening in the Market quarter when the facts were discovered.

"No. 27 in the Rue St. Sauveur is a building of some age, the lower floors of which are occupied by offices or expert agencies. On the third and fourth floors are the modest households of small business men, while the fifth floor, consisting of attics, is inhabited by various establishments of the working class. At the end of a long dark passage which leads from the top of the staircase past the doors of these rooms, there is a small apartment of three rooms whose windows look on to the street.

"On March 3rd last a certain Jean Mourin, 45 years of age, took possession of this lodging which had been transferred to him, together with the furniture, by an employé in the Post Office, one André G——. The arrival of Mourin, who had previously been living in a hotel in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, was preceded by that of two large trunks. Subsequently he acquired a piano. Where did this tenant come from?

"The object of the present enquiry is to establish this. It has been ascertained that he stayed only a short time in the hotel in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. On the tenants' register he is entered under the assumed name of Thévenet, and is described as being of no profession and coming from Canada. It is probable that this point will soon be cleared up.

"Although of somewhat eccentric character and quite uncommunicative, Mourin who had some independent means, was a man of regular habits.

"According to the reports of the neighbours he played his piano a great deal. It does not appear that, during his residence at the two addresses given above, he engaged in any remunerative occupation.

"The evidence differs regarding his appearance. While the hotel-keeper and the staff assert categorically that Mourin wore a short round beard, and that his hair was grey, the lodgers at the Rue St. Sauveur maintain that they always knew him as clean shaven,

and wearing his hair long 'like an artist.' This singular contradiction has a certain importance, as will be seen later.

"Mourin received no letters or visits. From the day on which he took possession up to September 20th, that is to say for a period of six months, so far as was known he held no communication with anyone. On the 21st September, a little after midnight, Mourin was brought back in a taxi by an unknown individual as the result of a somewhat singular incident which took place in a music-hall in the République quarter.

"Mourin having by accident come into the company of the individual in question was overcome by a nervous shock of such a nature that, as a result of the meeting, and for several days afterwards, he remained in a condition which gave considerable cause for alarm.

"The unknown personage, as we have said, having brought Mourin, who was still unconscious, back to his lodging, stayed with him, while Dr. Morelli, who was called in, rendered first aid. When questioned by the neighbours and the doctor, the unknown repeatedly asserted that he did not know Mourin. About the middle of the night he went away, having paid the cab: in any case his presence appeared to exasperate the sick man.

"This person remained long enough in the room for various witnesses to notice and recall his appearance.

"On this point their statements are in agreement: he was of middle height, about 45 years of age, of a good humoured expression, wearing a beard and dressed like a workman in good circumstances: he spoke in a husky voice and disclosed incidentally that his profession was that of a tailor.

"Since that day he has not been seen either in the building or in the district.

"On the morning of Friday the 8th December a lodger on the same story, Madame Petiot, who looked after Mourin, came as usual and knocked at his door. No one answered. She tried to lift the latch. The door was shut. Madame Petiot was not particularly astonished as Mourin had gone away, in the preceding June, in rather an odd manner, and had returned just as the police-commissary of the district was about to have his apartment opened.

"At the same time Madame Petiot thought fit to let the porter know.

"By the next day, which was yesterday, Saturday, Mourin had not re-appeared. No doubt the other lodgers would not have informed the police at this stage unless one of them, M. Brielle de Chuinaz, had not made an unexpected discovery. In his attic he picked up by accident a key which he recognised at once as being that of Mourin's lodging. Somewhat disturbed

by this discovery M. de Chuinaz informed his neighbours.

"By a general agreement it was decided to place the matter before the Commissary of Police, who came round forthwith and entered the apartment.

"A terrible spectacle awaited the magistrate and those who accompanied him.

"In a room which Mourin used as bedroom lay the body of a man half decomposed and covered by a sheet. As soon as the neighbours saw it they recognised it at once: it was the unknown who on the night of the 21 and 22 September had brought Jean Mourin home and had never been since in the neighbourhood of the Rue St. Sauveur.

"On his neck were the marks of strangulation and he appeared to have succumbed during a violent struggle. In his pockets were papers bearing the name of Gervais, tailor, without any note of an address. But it would seem that these papers are false. The name is entirely unknown to the employers and workmen's Union.

"The preceding circumstances would appear in no way to distinguish the case from an ordinary murder except that the details now to be related, suggest something strange and disconcerting, something almost in the nature of an hallucination.

"Near the bed on which the corpse was lying the examining magistrate discovered in a drawer of the small bedroom table two photographs which, when compared with the corpse, left no doubt in the minds of the witnesses.

"They were two photographs of the victim. How did they come to be there? This is the point which the enquiry is attempting to clear up.

"But this is where the mystery begins. On the first of these photographs is the following inscription scratched with a knife on the gelatine of the plate.

"'*Mourin* (Jean); age 42. Fontenay (Vendée); musician. Ob. 1032 Rm. 67. June 11th, 1920.' On the second in the same handwriting, 'Mourin (Jean); age 44; Fontenay (Vendée); musician. Ob. 2815 Rm. 67. August 12th, 1922.'

"It would seem therefore, if importance is to be attached to this discovery, that here is the real Jean Mourin, while the supposed assassin, that is to say the lodger of the Rue St. Sauveur, must be someone else. But there is a further peculiar circumstance.

"When these photographs were shewn to the hotel-keeper of the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires he recognised his old tenant without the slightest hesitation. When confronted with the corpse he did not hesitate for a moment. 'This is certainly the man who lodged in my house until March 6th last.'

"The police were about to reach the conclusion that between the moment when the man with a beard left the hotel and the time when the man who wore no beard took possession of the lodging in the Rue St. Sauveur, there occurred purely and simply a substitution of identity. But at this point a new fact came to light. The police inspectors discovered in a desk a voluminous correspondence and various old photographs proving that the name of the man who has disappeared was in fact Jean Mourin, born at Fontenay-le-Comte (Vendée) on March 5th, 1879. There can be no question of an usurpation of civil status. Consequently the tenant of the Rue St. Sauveur, that is to say the supposed murderer, must be the real Jean Mourin.

"Must it be assumed therefore that the inscriptions on the photographs of the dead man are false and intended to mislead any investigation? No, for the officers at Headquarters who deal with questions of identity at once recognised them as medical photographs which must certainly be authentic. To sum up we have here a murderer and a victim having the same name, and at different times, the same appearance.

"Indeed, except for this latter point the characters of the drama are exactly identifiable with each other.

"One is lost in conjecture. Unless it is subsequently established that the man who has disappeared is named Gervais—which the correspondence seized makes highly

improbable—the astounding hypothesis must be accepted that these two individuals have the same appearance and the same name. But even if this improbability is admitted the mystery does but grow deeper. Only the arrest of the supposed murderer can throw a little light on the imbroglio.

"One final detail will bring the mystery home to our readers.

"On the night of the crime Mourin came home alone about half past ten. He went out at dawn and walked without hurrying in the direction of the boulevards. In the interval no sound of a quarrel was heard. The concierges, when questioned, assert that on the night in question they only opened the front gate to tenants belonging to the house.

"The magistrate's enquiry is being pursued. The Anthropometrical Section will take impressions of the finger prints of the murderer and his victim. The ablest inspectors from Headquarters are searching for Mourin. Throughout the evening and during part of the night there has been an enormous crowd, in spite of the bad weather, in front of the house in which the crime took place.

"At the moment of going to press we are informed that a hairdresser in the Rue des Martyrs, who had seen in an evening paper certain details about the crime in the Rue St. Sauveur, came of his own accord to

see the examining magistrate. He announced that on a certain day which he could not exactly fix, but before the end of April, an individual answering to the description of the supposed murderer came into his shop to get his face completely shaved.

"The hairdresser had been much struck by the excited condition of his customer and by his eagerness to get his appearance altered. The photograph of the victim was shewn to him and he recognised it at once as that of his customer.

" 'That's him,' said he. 'I remember his eyes very well.'

"The worthy citizen has been bidden to hold himself at the disposal of the police for a confrontation which cannot be long delayed, for it seems that the police are already on the track of the assassin who, on the day following the crime, took the train for Chaumont. It is thought that he has sought refuge in Switzerland."

. . . . . .

Jean remained rigid. His hands were clammy, his eyes staring, and his back was cold with sweat.

The last phrase of the article reassured him completely. But he was afraid of moving lest his trembling gait should attract attention. So he stayed motionless leaning against the tree, his eyes fixed on the paper that he held wide open. But supposing he had followed his original idea and gone to Geneva! He shivered.

Then suddenly he felt a sensation of extreme tranquillity. The sight of the portrait, which was that of the dead man, gave him at one and the same time a feeling of deliverance and of anxiety for his own safety. No one would see that face again. The false Mourin had been wiped out of the world, destroyed: there was no crime in that. It was like a sham suicide, the removal of an impersonation. He had merely strangled a phantom, *his* phantom, the persistent phantom of his own reflection.

And here were the stupid police taking him for Gervais.

They were looking for Gervais whom they had just deposited on the marble slabs of the Morgue. What a sinister farce. He wanted to shout out to all those readers of newspapers who were walking back towards the centre of the town, "I am Jean Mourin."

He pictured the scene, fainting women, and everybody running for the police. And the tocsin ringing at Moret!

"Come," he murmured to himself, "I mustn't be so stupid."

He folded the paper and put it in his pocket, and, as lunch-time was near, he walked slowly in the direction of the hotel, by the Sablons road.

He ate with a good appetite. At the adjoining tables everyone was discussing the astonishing news. There

was a general feeling of incredulity and the invention of the story was ascribed to the dearth of news from which the papers were suffering.

"This" observed a tall and serious-looking individual, "is the sort of rubbish that gets all over France instead of proper instruction on economic subjects."

But someone else, pointing to the photograph, objected.

"There are people who knew him, so you will see that there must be something in it."

"Is there anyone?" thought Jean. And the image of Dr. Hugues immediately came into his mind. He never thought of Dr. Hugues without fear. By this time the doctor in Grenoble knew everything. He had read the papers and he would certainly be telegraphing to the magistrates that he was at their disposal.

This idea was so vivid in Jean's mind that he found in the face of the first speaker a resemblance to the learned doctor.

The servant poured out the coffee. Jean lit a cigarette and took the paper out of his pocket.

He went through it from end to end like an idle person killing time. He was not reading. The lines wandered on, devoid of sense, under his absent eyes. He struggled against a somnolence that was overcoming him. *Theatres, Prices at the Markets, Stock Exchange, Latest News, Exchanges, Sport.* Suddenly, an illumi-

nation. His eyes fell upon the following, in small print, at the bottom of a column on the fifth page:

Mail Steamers.

Long distance mails. French and Foreign. FAR-EAST. S.S. *Maelstrom* (Sw. R. Co.), mails Dec. 10th. Havre for Corunna, Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Port Said, Djibouthi, Colombo, Singapore, Canton, Shanghai, Yokohama (leaving Havre Dec. 13th).

Jean wondered later, and never knew, if he had been dreaming. He said the names, all the names over to himself, closing his eyes on the visions they evoked. They passed and repassed in magic cohorts, full of melancholy splendour.

Spain, Portugal, Africa, Ceylon, China. Was it a dream that unrolled this changing panorama of capitals, domes, pagodas, harbours, naked humanity, tropical rivers, tumultuous seas, gigantic freights and silky dragons. Jean was in a little hotel in the Seine-et-Marne, a newspaper on his knees and his eyes shut. A servant who was folding napkins might imagine she was near him, but he was already going forth to those lands of forgetfulness where the traveller thinks he turns his back on his sorrows. Jean on his chair, with his head bent, was no more than a dream of tapering masts and smoke.

O to get away! In a flash he had forgotten everything, his misery and his crime. If he could only escape his destiny that seemed like a curse upon him! He

understood now that he hated his fellow men, without reflecting that he had done nothing to get into touch with them and follow them on the way. They had passed near him but they had not helped him. What had he come back to look for in his living death in the midst of a world that was deaf to the mystery of his existence.

What was the use of striving against the eternal powers that dictate the life of human societies and which mortal men obey just as they listen to the throbbing of the blood in their veins? A country is the creation of an epoch. The hearts of its citizens are but a single heart and it is shut behind a barrier like a wall.

The miracle of Lazarus is but an ancient lie: among the millions of living men there is no place at all for one who has returned from death.

O to get away! Henceforward, he would not look for support among his own kind. He would go to one of those countries where men live and die like insects in a countless swarm.

Beyond the forests and seas there are cities full of overflowing humanity where, under the almighty sun, multitudes of men ceaselessly pullulate, in a gigantic confusion of stench and noise—a cauldron of peoples. O to lose himself in these thronging crowds, deafened by the din of gongs beaten night and day by the hundred arms of gods seated under their crimson roof-trees!

What else could he do? He would depart and week after week leave further behind him the land of his fathers, where by the cruelest of miracles, he was the solitary stranger, a hermit, a leper.

He would set forth to the vast desert of exile where all stand side by side and are equal,—outlaw, settler, fugitive, missionary and soldier. The sea would close, bit by bit, the pathway that the ship had opened. Morning after morning in the same place the sun would rise cleansed from the waves and sink to the edges of the darkened sky into the western sea. After days and days through forests and over seas Jean Mourin would find in the heart of Asia the city where he would give up for ever his search for the key to the riddle and would wait for his death. And yellow men would shut down the earth over the remains of him who was no one and came from the unknown.

Jean shook himself and picked up the paper and made sure of the dates. The date on the newspaper was December 17th. He went along at once to the proprietor and paid his bill. The same evening he arrived at the Hotel de Bordeaux at Havre and requested the porter to book his passage on the *Maelstrom*.

Three days to wait. Jean showed no sign of impatience. And he felt no further sensation of fear. He went from one café to another, mixing with the dockers, the Customs House men and policemen, and took no sort of precautions.

But a singular agitation was troubling his mind. While a secret sense of security strengthened him against the danger of being tracked and taken by the collar, he had to fight against a desire, which increased every day, of taking refuge in the hospital at Grenoble. In the old hospital, with Dr. Hugues and Sister Céline. He pictured to himself the happy days and silent nights in Room 67, and this with a lucidity that surprised him and gave him the sensation of coming out of a delirium. A thin gleam of light shone under the closed door of his recollections. Everything that Gervais had read and spoken for sixteen years in that room lay in a confused mass in the consciousness of Mourin. Now Gervais was dead, should he not take the place of his own double and thus escape the consequences of his crime? Should he go back to annihilation or go away,—which? He did not know. He was under some unknown direction, now as always.

While he talked to himself and gesticulated as he walked along, some curious passers-by stopped. He quickened his pace and to keep himself in countenance looked up at the clock on the Arsenal. Then creeping along some blackened palings he moved off, away from the railway station and disappeared under a portico, while a hungry dog stood barking at the sky.

III

M. Jean Mourin, first class passenger, walked quickly up the gangway.

The rain drove the black plumes of smoke that rose from the ship into the fog, amid clanging bells and hooting sirens. A few passengers were already walking briskly round the deck. Others, wrapped in rugs, were lying on deck chairs. Everyone, passengers, stewards, bandsmen, postal officials, felt their individuality enhanced by the fever of departure. Only the sailors in their blue jerseys preserved the quiet demeanour of people who were going about their accustomed business.

Jean found his cabin, tried the taps in the basin, and moved the lamp which stood on a shelf and would throw too much light on the head of his bed. A monotonous rain pattered down upon the porthole from the leaden depths of the sky. The vivid white walls gave out a slight odour of tobacco: the door, of which the upper panel was opaque glass, opened on to a thickly carpeted corridor: and the soft shadows of the attendants flitted across the dim square of light.

On the shelf lay an open copy of the *Illustration* displaying on one side photographs of a new steamer

and on the opposite page pictures of Paris on a day of festival.

Jean sat down on the bed for a moment. He took out of his luggage a cap, a handkerchief and some gloves: then he began to think about his valuables and banknotes. He stuffed the money into his pocket and left the rest in his trunk which he carefully locked and then, with his hands in his pockets, he went up on deck.

. . . . . .

The passengers seemed to have increased in numbers. Most of them, in spite of the rain, were leaning against the side of the ship watching the quay where their friends were standing several deep waving handkerchiefs and umbrellas.

Suddenly the siren was silent and the quay slowly moved away. The ship was casting off. Jean hurried towards the bows and stood by a bench at the top of the gangway ladder. He stared at the green walls of the harbour as they passed him. With dry eyes he was starting off on his endless exile. Although he watched with a melancholy fixed gaze the land as it seemed to turn and subside into the sea, he did not see it with the eyes of the emigrant.

Can the man who has survived death be said to have a country? Can there be a more implacable desert in the world than a man's own country when its inhabitants are unknown and enemies?

The ship was already cutting a track through the stormy plain of the open sea. Jean lowered his eyes and noticed below him, on the third class deck, a man dressed in a shabby suit, carrying a small bundle knotted into a check handkerchief, and leaning against a capstan. He raised his head and Jean saw that he was weeping. It was an unfortunate man who was following his destiny. He wept as he watched two blackened mooring-posts, an iron ring, the square mass of an abandoned landing stage with its old ravelled ropes, pass and disappear into the night. He wept because that paved quay which he would never tread again, which would be washed by the tides and swept by the careless winds of the sea, was for him the end of France. Jean shook his head and went away. Why had not he, like this poor wretch, something to regret?

It was very cold. The date was December 13th, one year, day for day, since Jean Mourin had awakened at the hospital.

. . . . . .

In the large saloon, the band was playing loudly. Jean, almost alone on the wind-swept deck, passed at regular intervals across the estuaries of light. The sound of the dark waves beating against the sides of the *Maelstrom* made the orchestra seem confused and far off. The windows were clouded by steam and Jean saw and heard, as in a dream, the concert, the black

coats and powdered shoulders, the waiters in their white jackets, and the light of a thousand lamps.

Through all her portholes and all her galleries the ship opened eyes of flame into the darkness which surged in upon her in thick eddies. Above, the saloons, bars, smoking rooms, the fantastic glitter of mirrors and lamps: below, the palpitating life of the crew and the engines, as they drove the great mass southwards through the night, like a palace *en fête*. From far off and further off moans of distress and anger came down from the rainy sky: the cries of sirens. The bell rang. It seemed like a summons from those who stood above in the storm, straining their eyes to pierce the blackness of the night.

Nothing but darkness and rain. The great *Maelstrom* moved on pursuing the lights on her bows. The rain grew heavier and the darkness seemed to grow even more thick. Suddenly the lightning flashed from the sky, hurled like a scythe of silvery blue, and its crooked zig-zag tore apart the velvet darkness.

Jean, blinded, leaned over the side towards the tumult of the waves. Then the need of movement, action, the desire to set his blood in motion took hold of him, and as the night wore away he strode along the decks, leaning against the bulwarks and climbing up and down the ladders.

Sleep? He would not think of it! In the midst of

the hurricane he had the feeling of escape from the suffocation of a narrow cell, as if he had slipped out of some closely guarded confinement and breathed at last the free air, the wholesome breeze of the open sky. He shut his eyes and it seemed to him as if he stood on a balcony over a garden on which a shower of rain was beating down. He felt uplifted by this exaltation and walked with rapid steps, making great meaningless gestures, and then stopped, holding on to the rails, and leaning towards the sightless distance as if he expected to see something appear.

. . . . . .

One by one the passengers went back to their cabins. The bell rang again. The sailors of the watch were going over the ship. Jean was still watching and shivering on deck. The rain beat savagely in gusts against the vessel. Sometimes it seemed to be whirled up to the sky and sometimes driven into eddies by the wind. And all around him in the night were the lamentations of the storm. Jean kept his eyes fixed on the same point: he was waiting for something he could not define —something that would appear. . . .

About the middle of the night the storm seemed to slacken. A harsher, colder wind began to get up. Jean looked towards the left of the *Maelstrom.*

Soon he observed two long points of green light against the blank abyss. He looked at them fixedly.

They did not increase in size but grew brighter. The blackness of the sea and the sky seemed to be developing a violet tinge. Were they the double lights of a light-house? They blinked like the two eyes of a cat and came rapidly nearer. The bell on board awoke again as if by magic and from up above in the mist came the hellish screaming of the siren.

The lights of the ship had long since been put out and nothing could be seen in the vast darkness but the gleam of the light-house which grew more distinct as the *Maelstrom* approached. The noise of the waves became clearer and Jean could hear the sound of distant singing. The lights gradually lengthened out into revolving rays like arms which seemed to be beating down on to the sea.

Jean Mourin went off to his cabin suspecting nothing. The white, carpeted corridor stretched away into the distance. In each door was a pane of opaque glass. A woman attendant in a linen apron was dozing in a chair. Just before he got to his door Jean noticed a narrow tall looking glass with a shelf above it. He looked at himself casually as he passed and saw with horror that his beard had grown. It was gray, the same colour as the overcoat he was wearing.

Jean stopped as if he had run into a wall.

"Where was he?"

Was this his cabin? He raised his eyes: the number

painted in red on the opaque glass gave him another shock: 67.

At the same moment he felt someone take him by the shoulders. It was not a sailor. It was a man dressed in blue, wearing a cap with a leather peak. And he heard a voice.

"Now then, Gervais, you have been out again tonight although I said you were not to go. Go back to your room and go to bed."

The hospital! He was in the hospital. He put his hands to his forehead. What did it mean, this horrible return, after his marvellous adventures?

Jean Mourin looked at the face of Gervais in the mirror. Then he passed his fingers over his cheeks and chin and felt his beard.

He saw the calendar on the wall and the large figures of the date: 13 December 1922. One evening. . . .

Just one evening. In the dark re-duplication of his being, the actions and the appearances of life—with the swift hallucination of a dream—had unrolled their confused and shining panorama. A few hours of light and now, for ever, he must return to the black imprisonment of madness.

Dr. Hugues shook his head with the sternness of an old soldier. Francoz was urging his patient forward, carefully but firmly. Sister Céline, who resembled Mother Petiot, had got up from her chair. Not a

movement in the white corridor of the hospital. Flowing arpeggios from an accordion: and from behind the partition the nasal utterances of M. Brielle de Chuinaz. An interminable rain beat upon the window-panes. Jean Mourin rushed into his room with a shriek of despairing laughter.

PQ2603. E585L313

a39001 003929638b